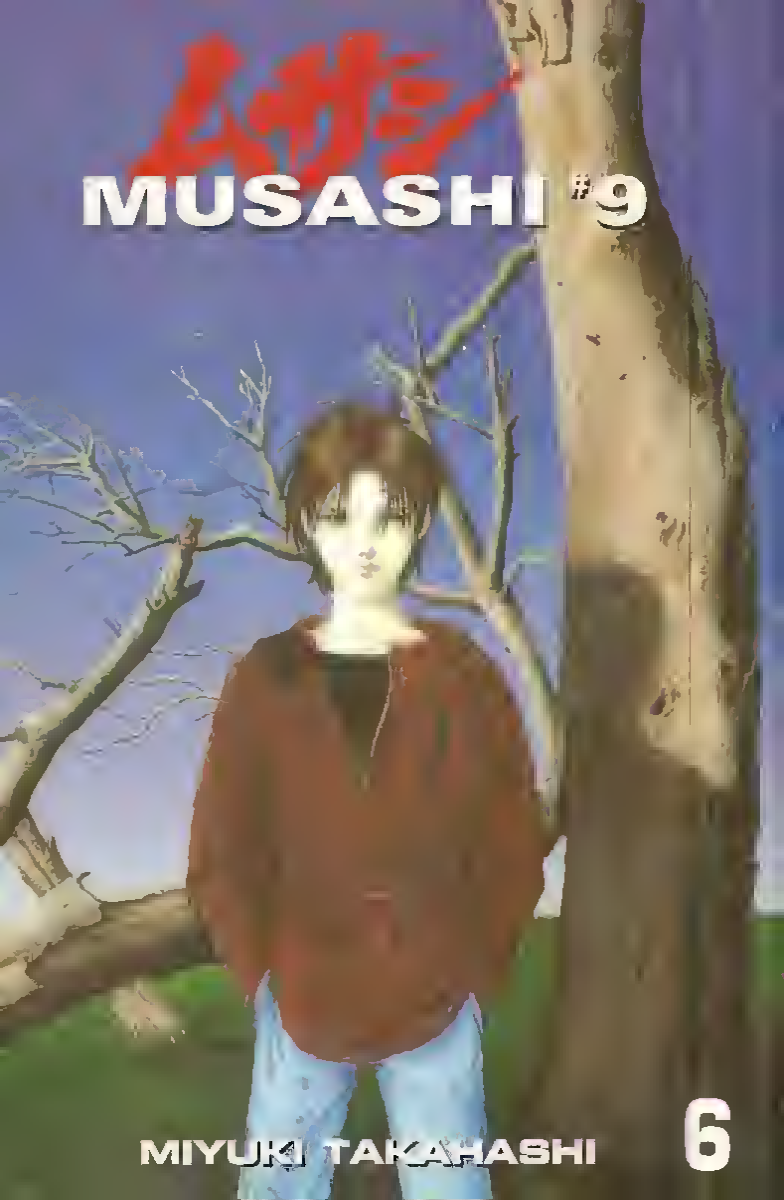

MUSASHI #9
MIYUKI TAKAHASHI
6

MUSASHI #9

volume 6



by Miyuki Takahashi

The story so far...

The history of mankind has been one of wars Relentless warfare would have doomed the planet to annihilation were it not for Ultimate Blue, a secret organization also known as the "other United Nations," and its team of super agents

Musashi Nine is one of them.

Musashi masqueredes as a boy and goes undercover at a high school to find evidence that would destroy a gun-smuggling organization called "White Dragon." She befriends Tachibana Shingo, who has unwittingly come across that evidence, and together they bring down the organization. The mission should have ended there except Lau survives White Dragon's demise and vows revenge

Now, Musashi must protect Shingo

However, Shingo's affection has grown into an uncontrollable fire that threatens them both!





TACHIBANA SHINGO

A hot-headed teenager befriended by Musashi when they avenged his best friend. He knows Musashi will leave when the mission is over and is deeply troubted over that



MUSASHI

Ultimate Blue agent Number Nine A.K.A. Shinozuka Kou

Is undercover at a boys' school, but is actually a girl. Single-digit agents like her have the power to change the world. Until now, she has not shown any emotions, but



LAU

Survived Ultimate Blue's dismantling of White Dragon.

Explosives expert.

Despises Ultimate Blue because they captured his brother.



No.19

Ultimate Blue agent.

He assists Nine in her missions as her lieutenant and at times as her double. While sympathizing with Shingo about his feelings toward Musashi, he tries to suppress them.

Nicknamed one-niner by Shingo

The history of mankind has been one of wars. Race. Religion. Philosophy. The causes are untold.

The combatants have their own justifications, but on occasion, some create a volatile situation that threatens to destroy the world.

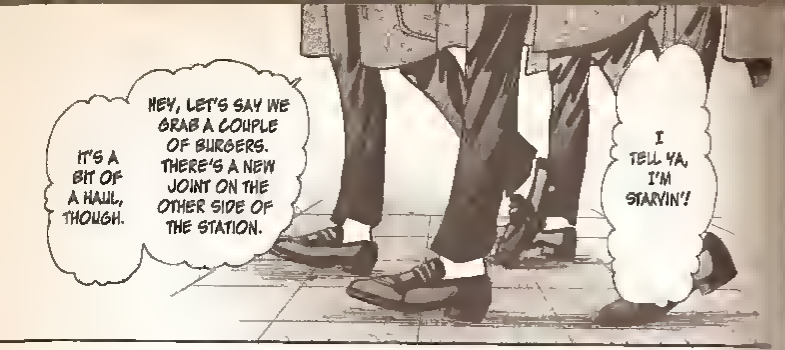


Ultimate Blue.

An organization shrouded in complete secrecy. Also known as "the other United Nations." Nobody knows when it was created. Nobody knows where it is based.

The Blue of the Seas.
The Blue of the Skies.
The Blue of the Earth.

The last line of defense against chaos.





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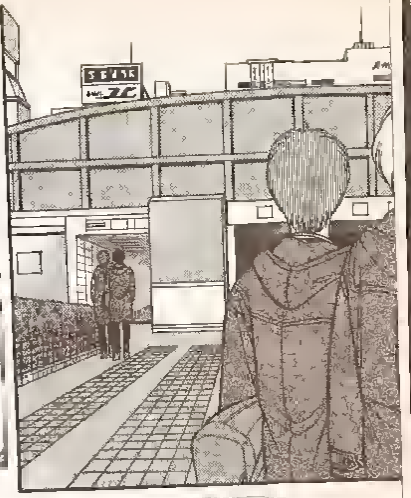
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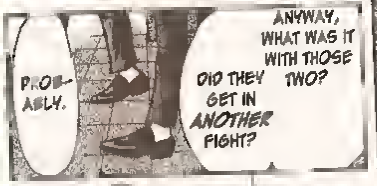
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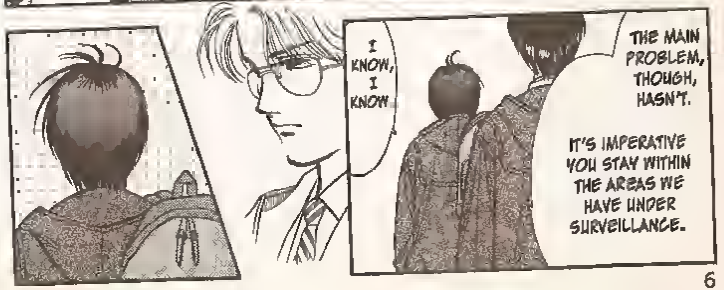

What am I supposed to do? I really don't know.
JUST SHUT UP! I KNOW!
SHINGO, I KNOW--
GET OFF MY CASE!
I'm feeling miserable. And it's only going to get worse.
She's gone the second this blows over.
And I'll never see her again.
Knowin' that's gonna happen, how am I not supposed to get upset?
You're incapable of feelin' what I'm goin' through. The only one that's hurtin' is--
KABOOM


MAYBE HE'S GONNA HELP SHINGO OR SOMETHING.
SHINGO I CAN UNDERSTAND, BUT SHINOZUKA? STUDY?




PROB-ABLY.
ANYWAY, WHAT WAS IT WITH THOSE TWO? DID THEY GET IN ANOTHER FIGHT?


I HEAR YA!
FORGET ABOUT 'EM. THE BURGERS BECKON.
THE DAMAGE FROM THE EARLIER EXPLOSION HAS BEEN TAKEN CARE OF.

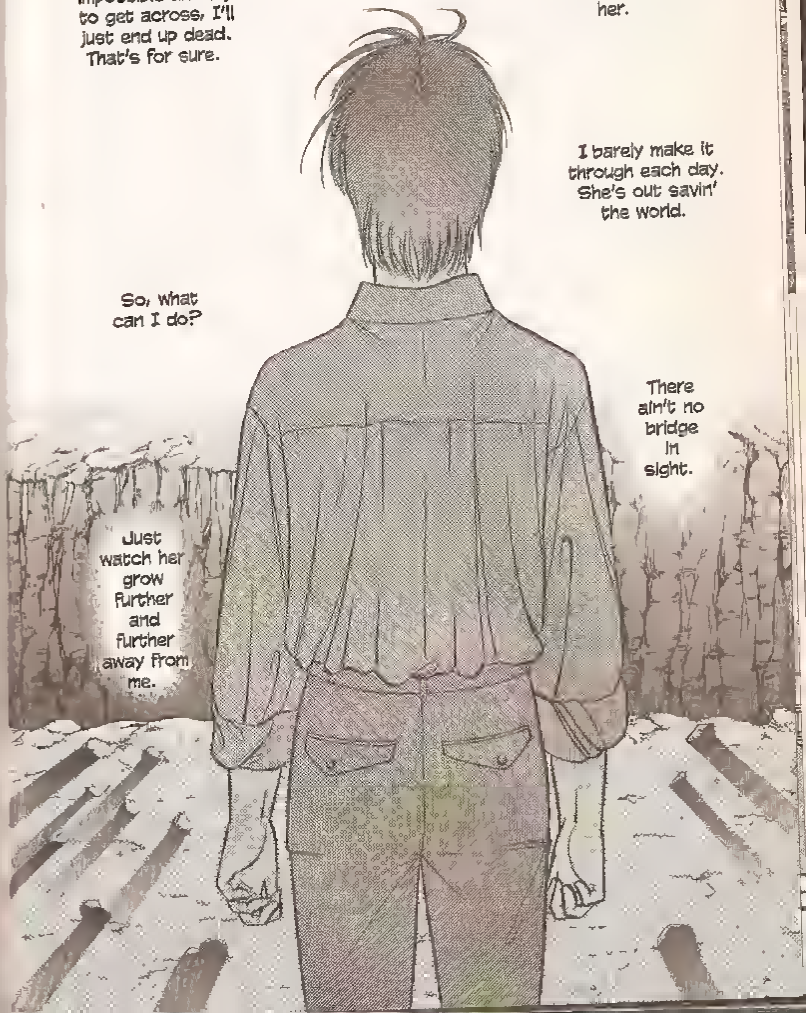

I KNOW, I KNOW.
THE MAIN PROBLEM, THOUGH, HASN'T.
IT'S IMPERATIVE YOU STAY WITHIN THE AREAS WE HAVE UNDER SURVEILLANCE.



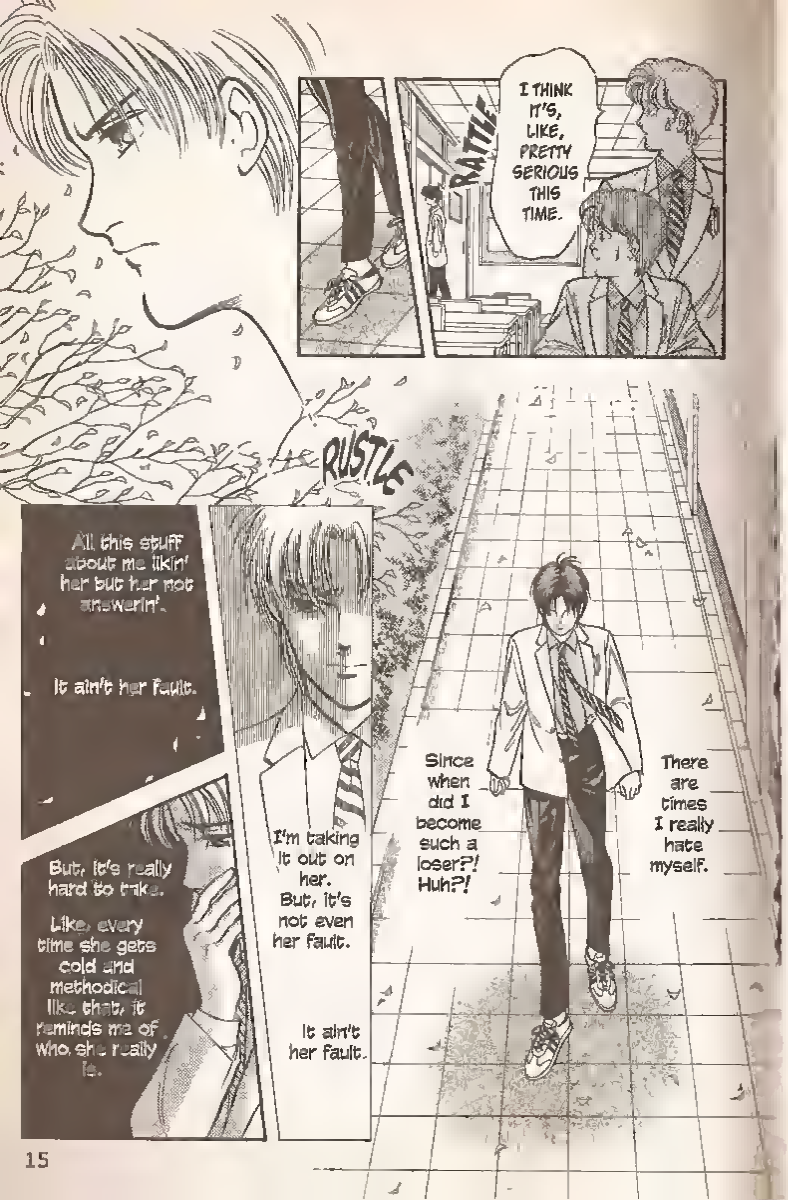


Mission 12: Memories of Eternity 2

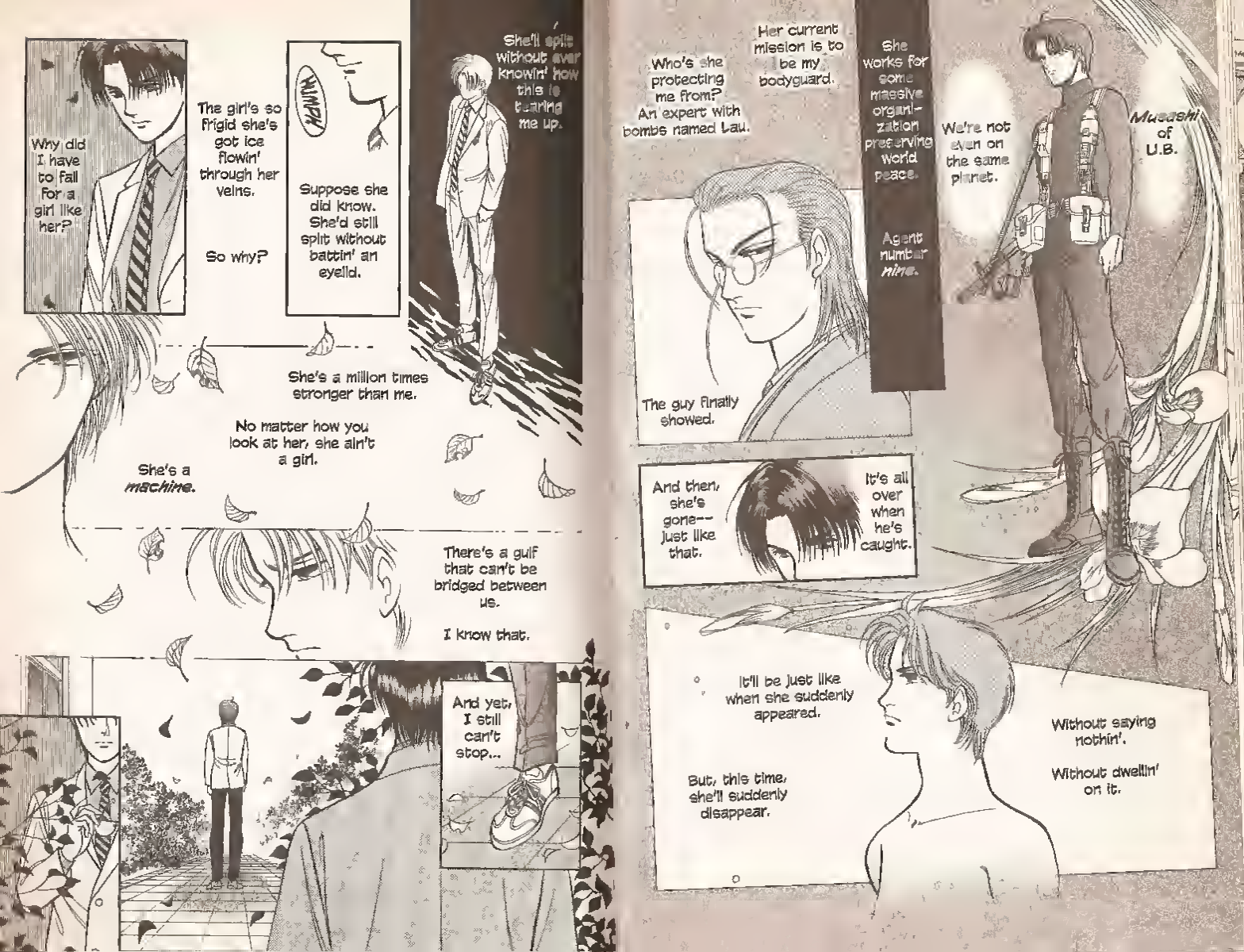

I'M SURPRISED I'M EVEN HERE!
KA-POW!
LIKE, I WAS CHECKING OUT A COUPLE OF MAGS IN THE BOOKSTORE AND THEN SUDDENLY--
It was extreme!
IT TOTALLY FREAKED ME OUT!
I HAD TO GO TO AN EAR SPECIALIST YESTERDAY. MY EARS ARE STILL RINGIN'.
MISSING BRAIN CELLS OR WHAT? MAN, YOU WOULDN'T BE SAYING THAT IF YOU'D BEEN THERE!
WHAT? MORI, YOU WERE THERE?
YEAH! ME AND SANO WERE GONNA CHECK IT OUT, WEREN'T WE, SANO?
IT WAS THE NEW BURGER PLACE THAT WENT UP, RIGHT?
YEAH, BUT FOR ALL THE SMOKE AND NOISE IT WASN'T MUCH OF AN EXPLOSION.
I WISH I'D BEEN.
YEAH, RIGHT!
SHUT UP OVER THERE!
THIS AIN'T A MOVIE.
DUDES, MAYBE IT'S A CONSPIRACY OR SOMETHING. LIKE, MAYBE SOMEBODY'S MARKED FOR DEATH, YEAH?
WHY DID IT BLOW UP?
MAYBE IT'S GOT SOMETHIN' TO DO WITH THAT EARLIER EXPLOSION.

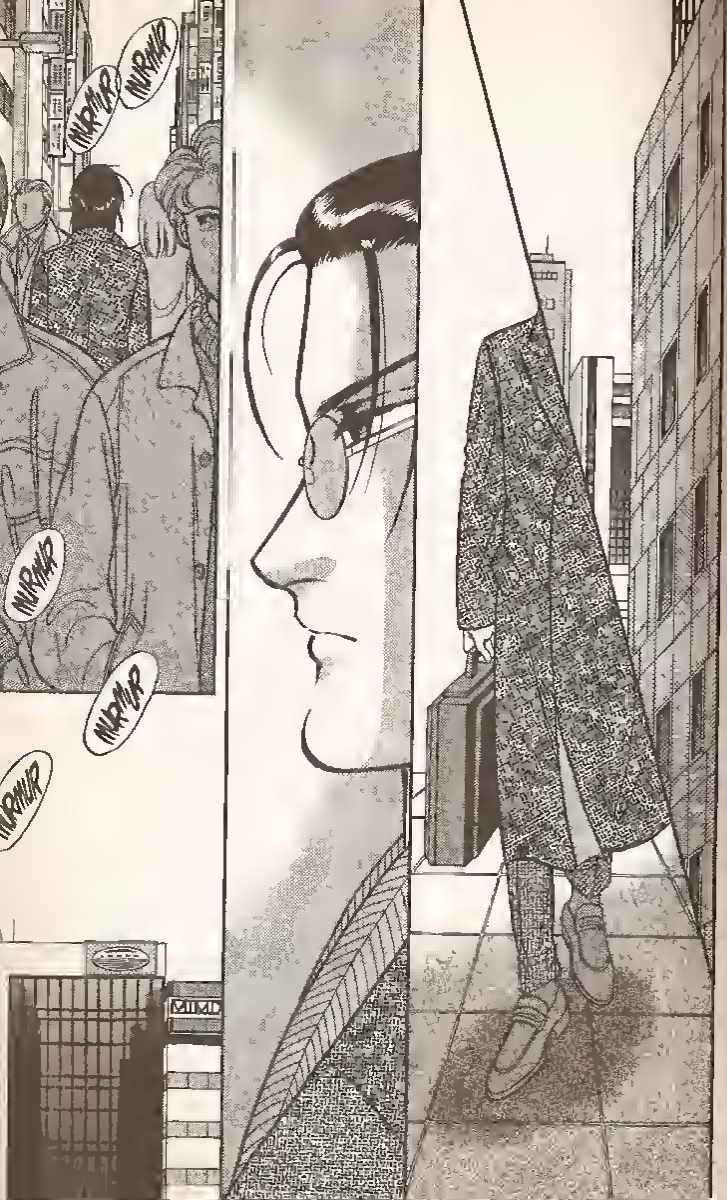

If I attempt the impossible and try to get across, I'll just end up dead. That's for sure.
There's a huge gulf between me and her.
I barely make it through each day. She's out savin' the world.
So, what can I do?
There ain't no bridge in sight.
Just watch her grow further and further away from me.


IT SHOWS HOW TRIVIAL YOU GUYS ARE!
HOW LONG ARE YOU LOSERS GONNA GO ON ABOUT SOMETHIN' THAT STUPID?
YOUR BUDDY'S IN A BAD MOOD.
I admit it. It'll ask a celebrity for his autograph!
WELL, EXCUSE ME FOR BEING TRIVIAL.
.....
GLAR
HEY, KOU!
WHEN HE'S LIKE THAT, IT'S OBVIOUS WHY.
DEAL WITH IT, WILL YOU?
EVERY TIME YOU GUYS GO AT IT, HE TAKES IT OUT ON US!
ABOUT THAT EXPLOSION YESTERDAY...
It'd be so much better if we really were.
...THE POLICE STILL DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT IT'S OBVIOUS IT WAS LAU.
Arguing?
IT'S NOT LIKE WE WERE ARGUING.
THERE YOU GO, SHINGO. YOUR FRIEND MORITA IS PERCEPTIVE.
.....
ANY OTHER TIME, YOU PROBABLY WOULD HAVE.
AND HE WAITED FOR YOU TO SHOW UP.
HE SET UP A FAST FOOD PLACE--THE SORT OF PLACE STUDENTS WOULD FLOCK TO.
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO NEXT, SO YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY ALERT.
ALL RIGHT?
THE BOMB WAS NOT DESIGNED TO KILL OR MAIM.
EITHER WAY, HE WANTS YOU ALIVE SO HE CAN GET TO ME.
HE COULD'VE TIMED THE BOMB TO GO OFF AFTER SCHOOL.
OR, HE COULD'VE TRIGGERED IT HIMSELF, THINKING YOU WERE WITH THOSE TWO.

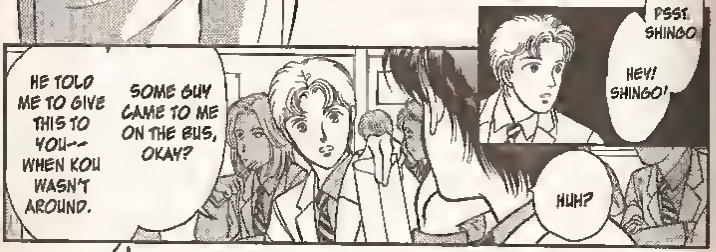

I THINK IT'S, LIKE, PRETTY SERIOUS THIS TIME.
RATTLE
RUSTLE
All this stuff about me likin' her but her not answerin'.
It ain't her fault.
But, it's really hard to take.
Like, every time she gets cold and methodical like that, it reminds me of who she really is.
I'm taking it out on her. But, it's not even her fault.
It ain't her fault.
Since when did I become such a loser?! Huh?!
There are times I really hate myself.

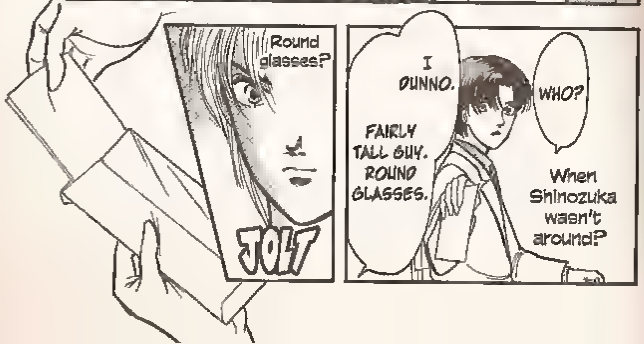

SLAM
DON'T SWEAT IT.
I AIN'T GONNA GET CAUGHT AND SCREW THINGS UP FOR YOU.
I CAN'T GO AROUND SCREWIN' UP YOUR ALL IMPORTANT MISSION, NOW CAN I?
FURTHER-MORE, STAY WITHIN YOUR--
JUST SHUT UP, WILL YOU?!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP DRONIN' ON ABOUT THAT!
SHINGO, I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY!
I'LL DO AS I'M TOLD. I WON'T GO NOWHERE.
SO, GET LOST AND STOP WORRYIN' ABOUT ME!
SHINGO?
.....
HEAVY...
SLAM


Why did I have to fall for a girl like her?
The girl's so frigid she's got ice flowin' through her veins.
So why?
HMMM
Suppose she did know. She'd still split without battin' an eyelid.
She'll split without ever knowin' how this is tearing me up.
She's a million times stronger than me.
No matter how you look at her, she ain't a girl.
She's a machine.
There's a gulf that can't be bridged between us.
I know that.
And yet, I still can't stop...
Who's she protecting me from? An expert with bombs named Lau.
Her current mission is to be my bodyguard.
She works for some massive organization preserving world peace.
Agent number nine.
We're not even on the same planet.
Musashi of U.B.
The guy finally showed.
And then, she's gone-- just like that.
It's all over when he's caught.
It'll be just like when she suddenly appeared.
But, this time, she'll suddenly disappear.
Without saying nothin'.
Without dwellin' on it.


MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR

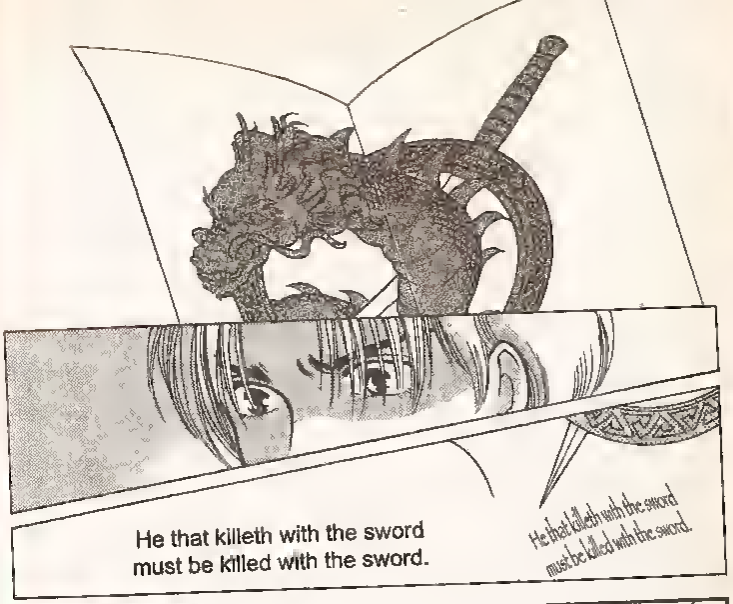

ALL RIGHT.
LOOK INTO IT PLEASE.
BEEP
AN EXPLOSION IN THE NORTH PART OF TOWN? WHY?
SHINGO GENERALLY DOESN'T GO THERE.
IN FACT, HE'S PROBABLY NEVER EVEN BEEN THERE.


PSST. SHINGO
HEY! SHINGO!
HUH?
SOME GUY CAME TO ME ON THE BUS, OKAY?
HE TOLD ME TO GIVE THIS TO YOU-- WHEN KOU WASN'T AROUND.

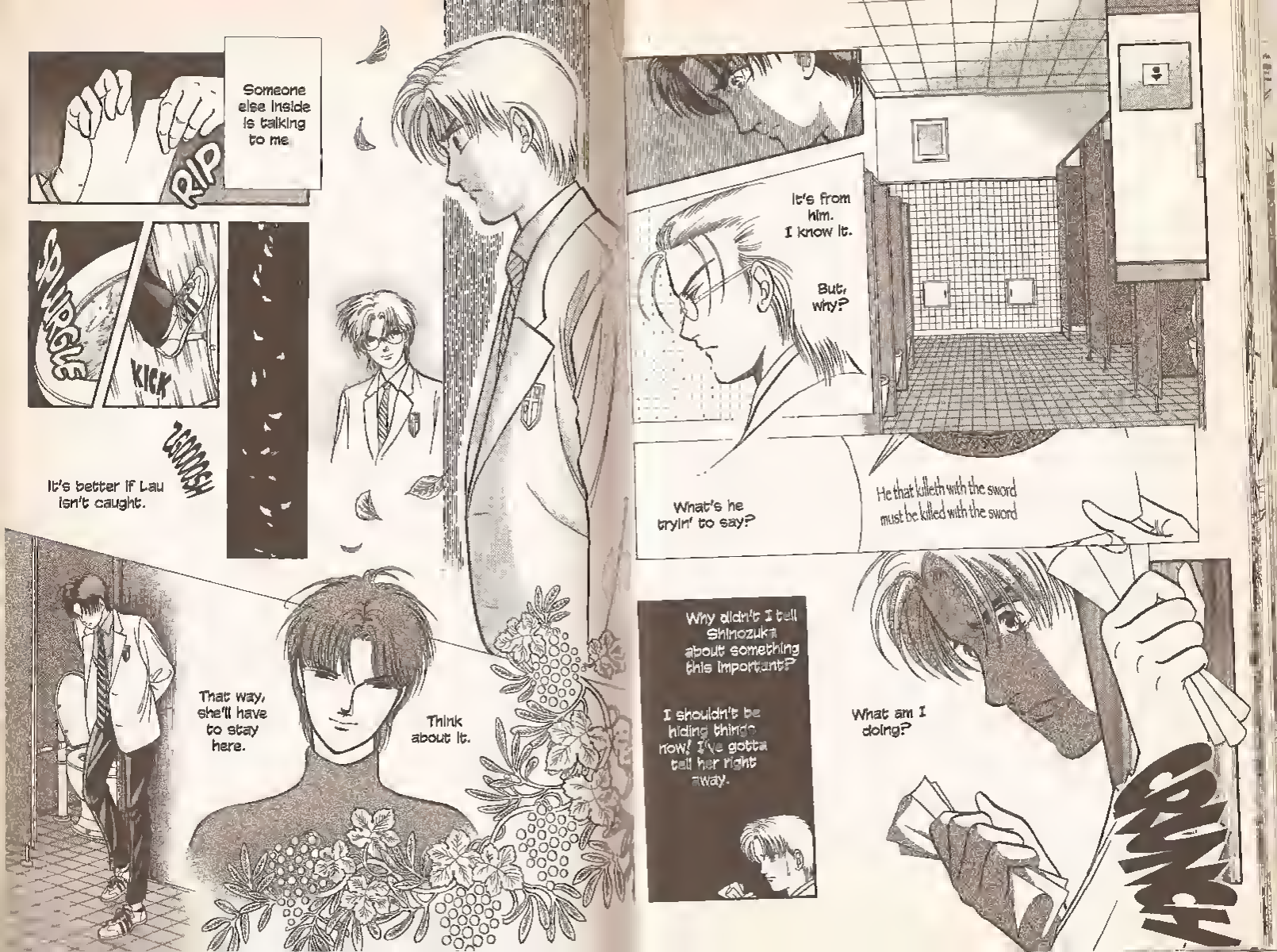

Round glasses?
JOLT
I DUNNO.
FAIRLY TALL GUY. ROUND GLASSES.
WHO?
When Shinozuka wasn't around?

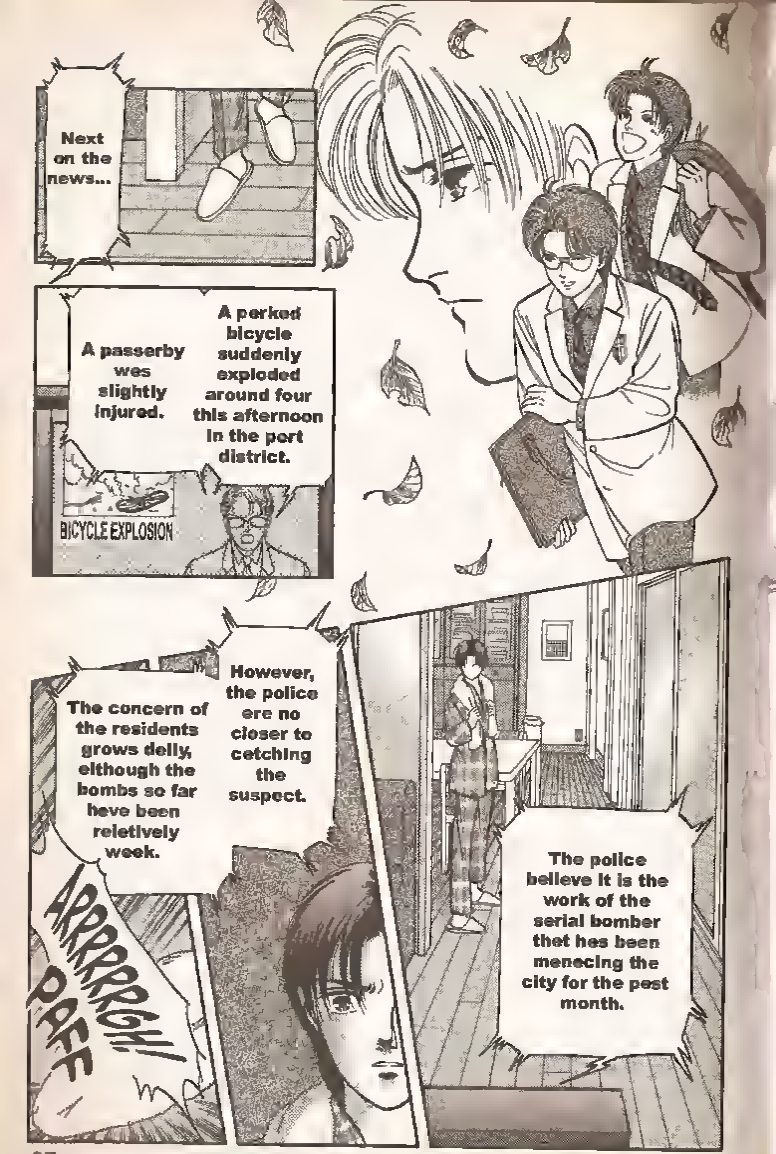

KOU, WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF CLASS.
KILL THAT MOBILE!
PI PI PI PI PI PI
BOOOM
HEY!
CLAT
IT'S AN EMERGENCY.
EXCUSE ME.
...
THOK
YES?
WHAT IS IT?


WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
.....
WHAT'S WRONG?
OH.
NEVER.
SHINGO.
IT AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' TO DO WITH YOU.
YOU LOOK PALE.
DO YOU EVER GO TO THE NORTH PART OF TOWN?
WELL, THIS MORNING, SOME...
WHAT DID?
MAYBE THAT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT.
LOOKS IT. WHAT DID SHINGO DO THIS TIME?
.....
I TELL YA, MORITA, IT'S PRETTY SERIOUS THIS TIME.


He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.
He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.


CLANG CLANG CLANG CLANG
UH... SURE.
DON'T SAY A WORD ABOUT THIS TO KOU!
RATTLE
SHUFF

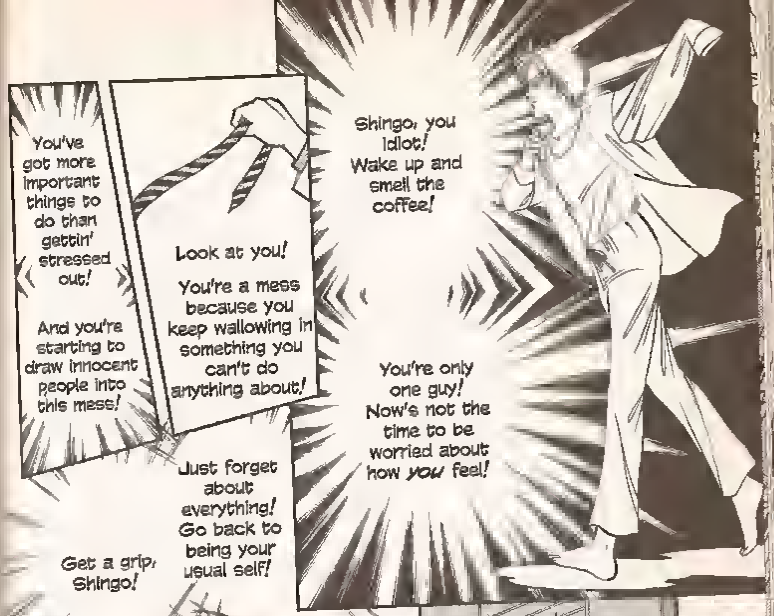

RIP
Someone else inside is talking to me
GURGLE
KICK
GUSH
It's better if Lau isn't caught.
That way, she'll have to stay here.
Think about it.
It's from him. I know it.
But, why?
What's he tryin' to say?
He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword
Why didn't I tell Shinozuka about something this important?
I shouldn't be hiding things now! I've gotta tell her right away.
What am I doing?
PUNCH


Next on the news...
A passerby wes slightly injured.
A perked bicycle suddenly exploded around four this afternoon in the port district.
BICYCLE EXPLOSION
The concern of the residents grows delly, elthough the bombs so far heve been reletively week.
However, the police ere no closer to cetching the suspect.
The police believe it is the work of the serial bomber thet hes been menecing the city for the pest month.
ARRRRRGH!
RAFF


GOUSHK
BAAAAAAM!
.....
I really do look awful, even by my standards.


WHY THERE?
I'VE NEVER BEEN THERE.
I THOUGHT HE WANTED ME.
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING I DON'T?
CREAK
UM... UM...
THE PORT BOMBING.
YOU KNEW?
THE NEWS.


LOSER.
HURRY UP. WE'RE GONNA BE LATE.
I'M RELIEVED YOU'RE BACK TO YOUR USUAL SELF.
WHAT ARE YOU SMILING ABOUT?
NO. WE'RE STILL LOOKING INTO IT. WE'LL LET YOU KNOW IF WE LEARN ANYTHING.
AH... RIGHT.

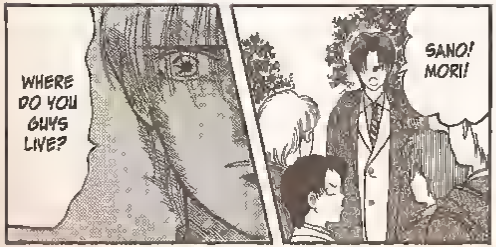

Shingo, you idiot! Wake up and smell the coffee!
You're only one guy! Now's not the time to be worried about how *you* feel!
Look at you! You're a mess because you keep wallowing in something you can't do anything about!
You've got more important things to do than gettin' stressed out!
And you're starting to draw innocent people into this mess!
Just forget about everything! Go back to being your usual self!
Get a grip, Shingo!


SHINOZUKA!
SLAM
AH.
GOOD MORNING.


OUTTA MY WAY, SHINGO!
Sano
Shingo.
UP YOURS!
YOU'RE IN THE WAY. GET DOWN LOWER!
SHUT UP! IT'S NOT MY FAULT YOURS IS RIGHT ABOVE!
JUST HANG ON!
...HE DID?
? ?
GO TO THE CRAFT SHOP AND BRING ME A TOOLBOX!
HURRY!
SANO! GET AWAY FROM THERE!
I WANT YOU PEOPLE OUT! AND, DON'T LET ANYONE IN!
NOW WHAT?


Absolutely nothing.
There's nothing I can do about it anyway.
It's better this way.
So, if that's the case, I might as well see her smile.
HEY, DUDES!
THAT?
IT'S NOTHING.
YESTERDAY, SHINGO GETS...
THEN I GUESS IT DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THAT.
Hey— Sano.
Hey dude.
YOU GUYS FINALLY MADE UP.
I WAS GETTIN' WORRIED FOR A SEC.
SORRY.
HI, MORITA.





He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.



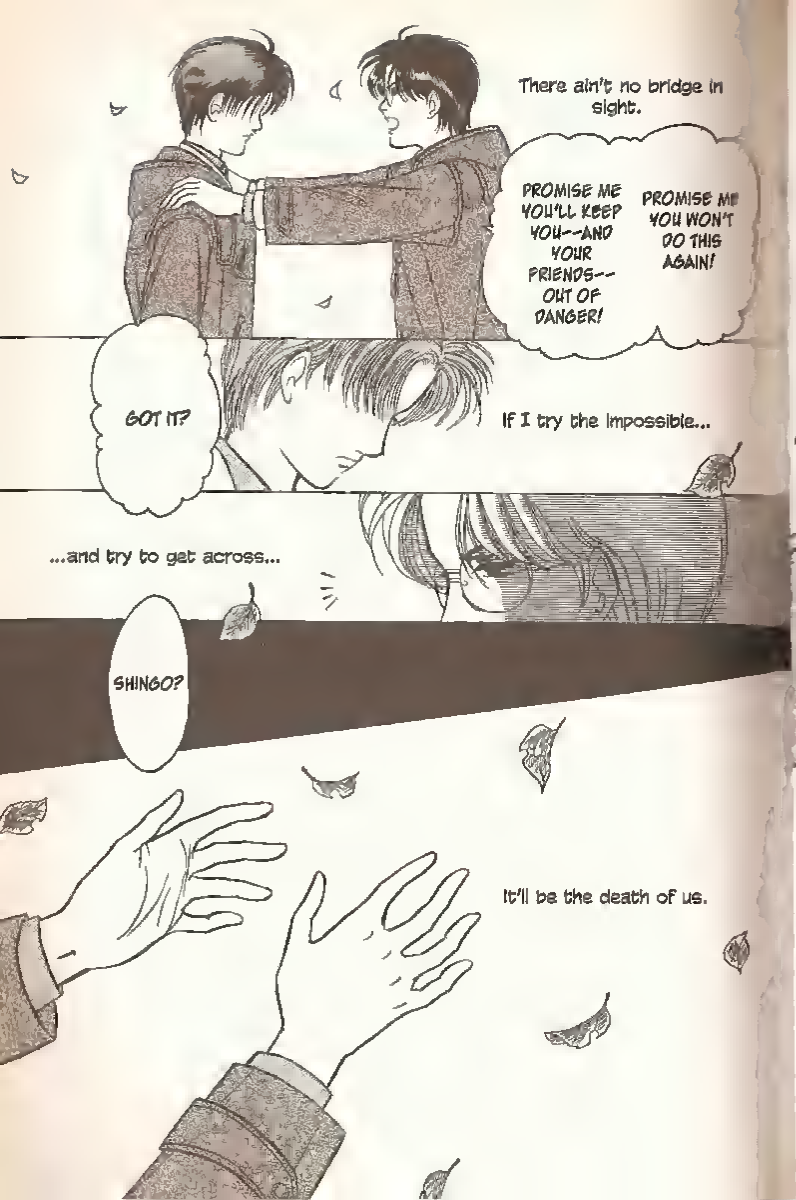

IN HERE.
I'LL TAKE IT TO THE OFFICE.
THERE'S NO REASON TO START A PANIC, SO LET'S KEEP THIS TO OURSELVES, OKAY?
RIGHT ON THUD THUD THUD
TOOK CARE OF IT?
THE BOMB?
I TOOK CARE OF IT.
HEY, WAIT UP!
CAN YOU REALLY DO THAT?
THAT WAS A REAL BOMB.
AN...TELL ME HE WASN'T...
...SMILING.
RUSTLE
I'M STARTIN' TO HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS HERE.
IS HE REALLY JUST SOME ORDINARY DUDE?
YESTERDAY
WHAT ABOUT THE BOMBS?
ON. YOU KNEW. IT WAS RIGHT NEAR MY PLACE.
MY PLACE, TOO.
I DIDN'T SAY NOTHIN' 'CAUSE IT'S TRIVIAL, RIGHT?
HUH?
THE NORTH PART OF TOWN.
PORT DISTRICT. WHY?
.....It wasn't for me.
Right from the beginning.
The burger place.
He wasn't gunning for me.
KOU?
CREAK
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
HEY! LET US IN!


SLAP
WHY DID YOU KEEP IT A SECRET?
THE LETTER FROM LAU.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?
YES. ULTIMATE BLUE HAD AN IDEA, BUT WE WEREN'T CERTAIN!
DIDN'T YOU REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT THAT LETTER WAS?!

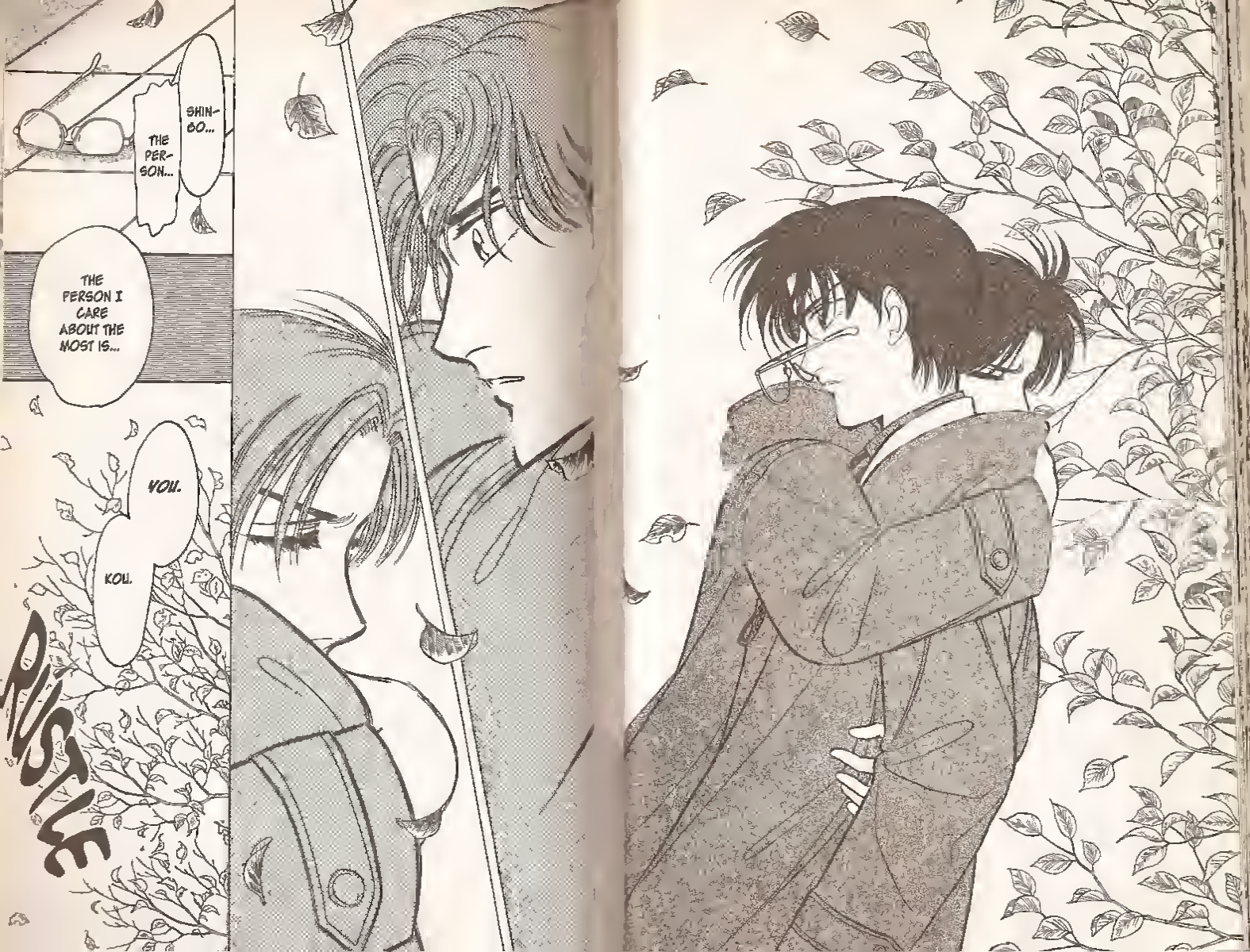

KOU! WAIT UP!
RUSTLE
KOU!
HUFF HUFF
YOU KNEW ABOUT THIS, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU KNEW.
WHY?!
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?!
WHY DID YOU KEEP IT A SECRET?!
THERE'S NO WAY U.B. COULD NOT HAVE MADE THE CONNECTION!
YOU KNEW, RIGHT?! YOU KNEW THEY WERE TARGETED!

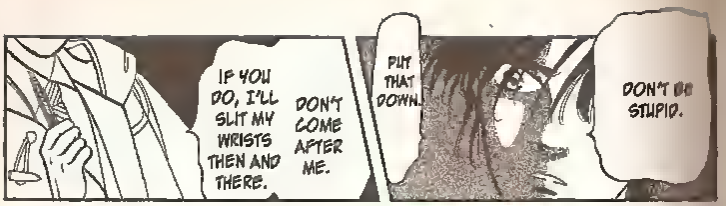

WHERE'S THE LETTER?!
I TORE IT UP AND FLUSHED IT DOWN A TOILET.
WHAT DID IT SAY?!
IT HAD A PICTURE OF A DRAGON AND A MESSAGE.
IT SAID, "HE THAT KILLETH WITH THE SWORD MUST BE KILLED WITH THE SWORD."
.....
IT'S FROM THE BIBLE. IT'S REVELATIONS 13:10.
HE LOST A BROTHER.
SO, HE WANTS YOU TO SUFFER IN THE SAME WAY.
YOU DON'T HAVE FAMILY. AND YOU'RE NOT CLOSE TO YOUR RELATIVES.
SO, THE PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT THE MOST ARE YOUR FRIENDS, RIGHT?
THE SAME SWORD. THE SAME SUFFERING.
THE PAIN IS WORSE WHEN OTHERS AROUND YOU ARE SLOWLY TAKEN DOWN FIRST.
THAT'S WHY NONE OF THE BOMBS WERE MEANT TO KILL.
HE NOW HAS SOMEBODY WORKING FOR HIM WITHIN THE SCHOOL.


ANYONE WHO'S SUDDENLY WEALTHY. ANYONE WHOSE FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND IS MISSING.
OR ANYONE ELSE ACTING SUSPICIOUSLY. I WANT THEM THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED.
THAT'S HOW THINGS STAND.
LOOK INTO EVERYONE GOING TO THIS SCHOOL, INCLUDING THE STAFF.
NUMBER 30, ARE YOU THERE?
YES.
RUSTLE
I'M ON IT.
BUT, WE'D HAVE KNOWN EARLIER--IF YOU HAD GIVEN US THAT LETTER!
WE WERE LUCKY WE CAUGHT ON BEFORE HE MADE HIS REAL MOVE.
OUR AGENTS WILL START GUARDING YOUR FRIENDS.
People are in trouble--and it's all my fault.

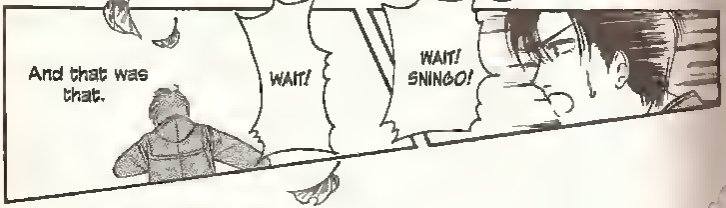

There ain't no bridge in sight.
PROMISE ME YOU'LL KEEP YOU--AND YOUR FRIENDS--OUT OF DANGER!
PROMISE ME YOU WON'T DO THIS AGAIN!
GOT IT?
If I try the impossible...
...and try to get across...
SHINGO?
It'll be the death of us.


WHENEVER YOU GO OFF AND DO THINGS ON YOUR OWN LIKE THAT, IT ENDANGERS NOT JUST YOU BUT OTHERS, TOO.
YOU KNOW HE'S A BOMB MAKING EXPERT.
I KNOW YOU'RE UPSET WITH ME.
BUT, RIGHT NOW, WE CAN'T WORRY ABOUT PERSONAL FEELINGS.
I KNOW THERE ARE TIMES YOU AREN'T HAPPY ABOUT IT!
I WANT TO CATCH HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND LET YOU OFF THE HOOK!
BUT, IF YOU'RE UPSET, TAKE IT OUT ON ME!
AND WITHOUT HAMPERING THE MISSION!
YOU CAN'T BE HAPPY ABOUT ALL THIS SURVEIL-LANCE, EITHER.
I'll never be able to cross it.
I'm just tryin' to make it through each day.
ARE YOU LISTEN-ING TO ME?
She's out savin' the world.
There's a huge gulf between me and her.


SHIN-GO...
THE PER-SON...
THE PERSON I CARE ABOUT THE MOST IS...
YOU.
KOU.
RUSTLE







I crossed the bridge--and chose the road to ruin.

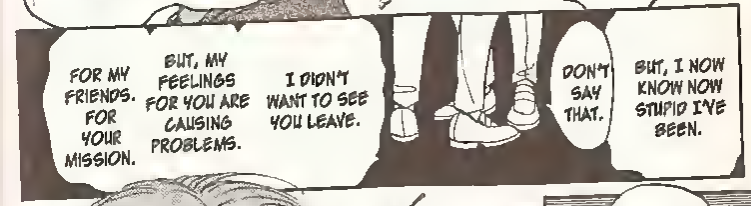
Never again...

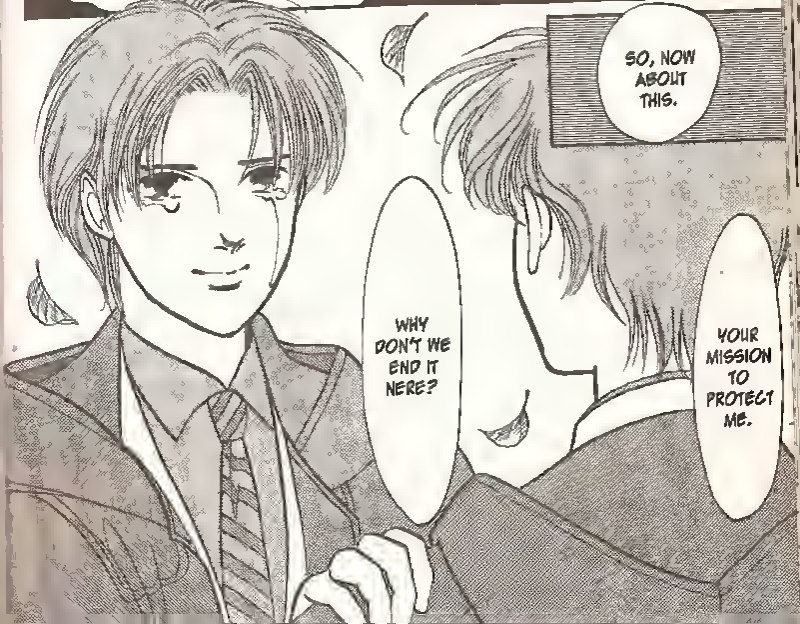
Never again would I be allowed to see her.

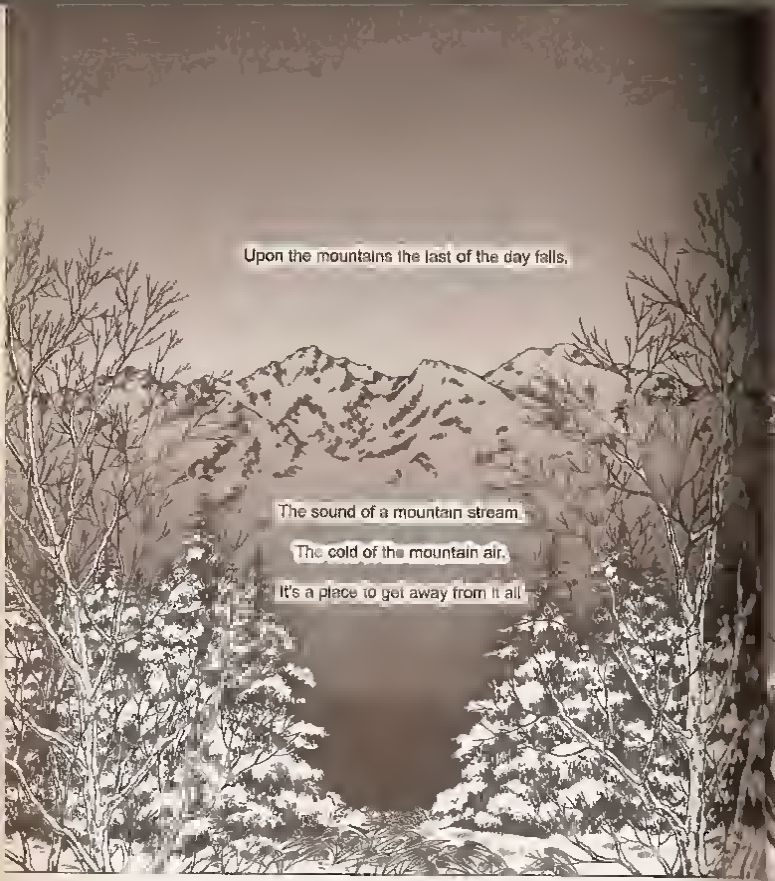
End of Mission 12: Memories of Eternity 2











Upon the mountains...

...the last of the days falls.



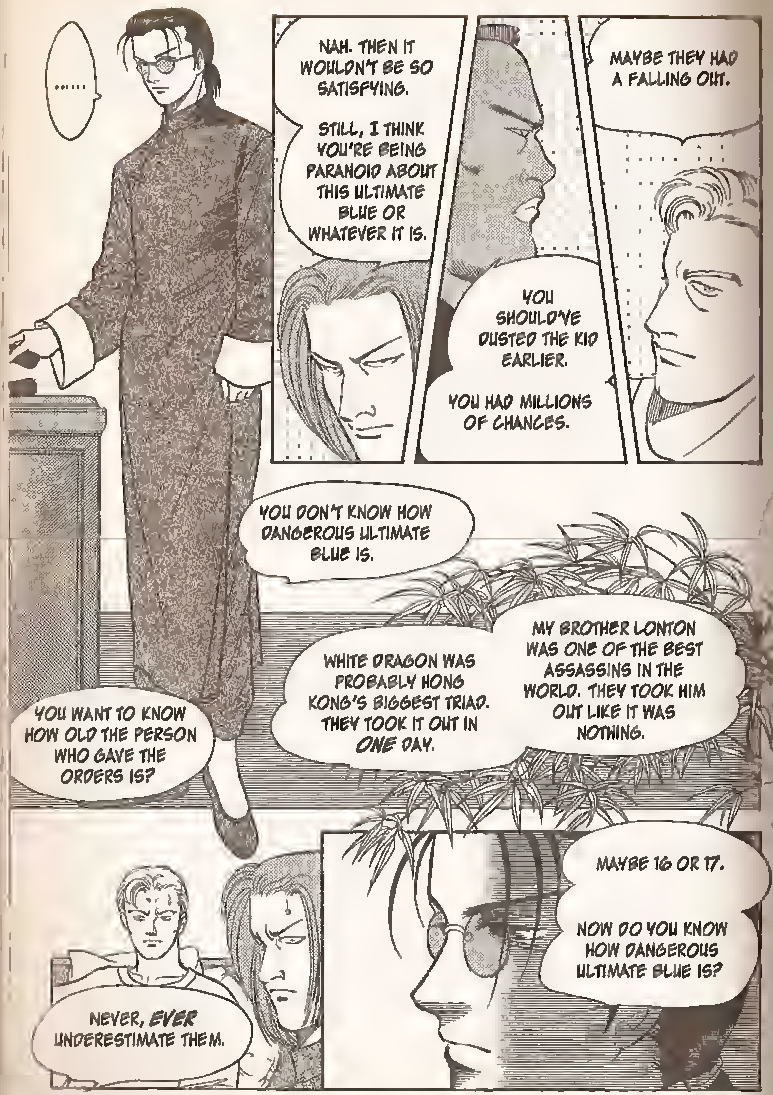
9番目のムサシ

Mission 12: Memories of Eternity, Part 3


ME?
YOU'RE MASA-YOSHI MORITA, RIGHT? SHINGO TACHIBANA'S FRIEND?
SHINGO? UH, YEAH... WE'RE FRIENDS.
I'M A FRIEND OF HIS, TOO.
YOU ARE?
YOU UNDER-STAND MY JAPANESE?
NAH. IF ANYTHING, THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS?
I CAN'T GET THROUGH TO SHINGO. I'M SORT OF WORRIED.
JR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
Tha train will be departing ahortly. Keep clear of the doora.
Shinagawa Statian. Shinagawa Station.
HI, MORI.

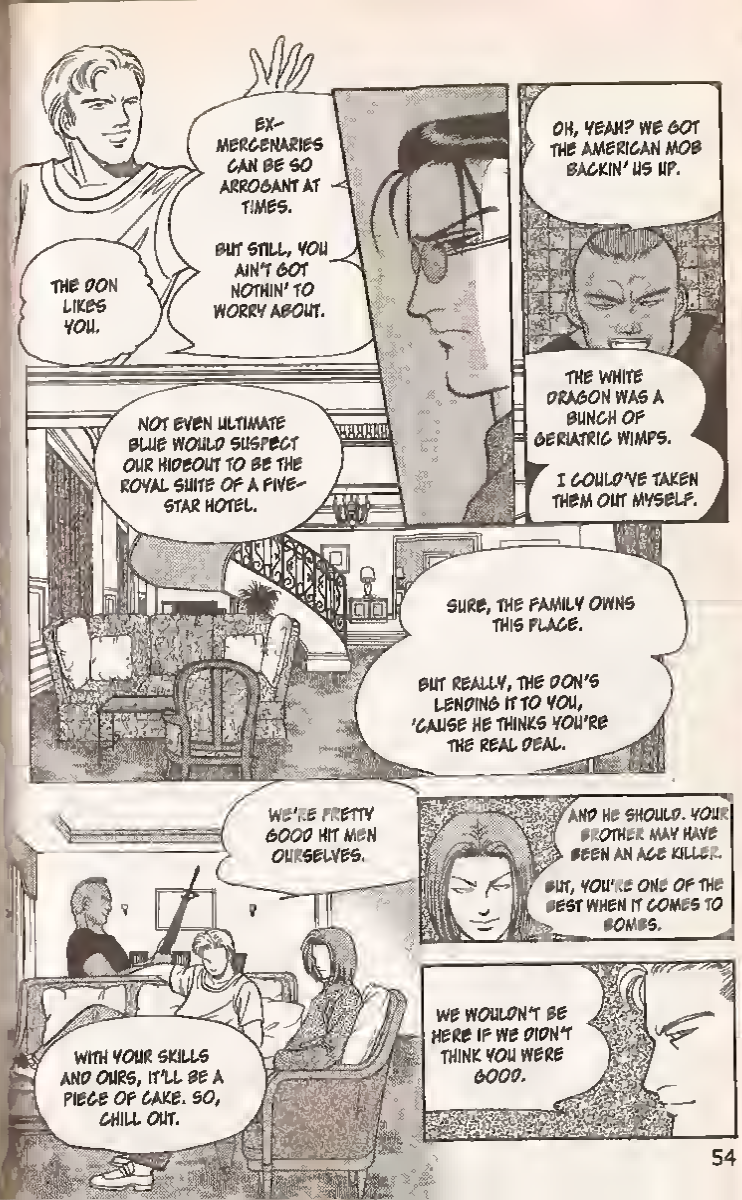

I DON'T THINK HE WAS LYING.
TACHIBANA'S MADE HIMSELF SCARCE WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE.
NOW WHAT?
We have to find him at any cost.
Without him, we can't do anything.
EASIER SAID THAN DONE.
THIS COUNTRY'S TINY, BUT IT'S STILL LIKE LOOKING FOR A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK.
Stop whining. You're a pro.
WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET THIS LUCKY AGAIN THEY ACTUALLY DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS.
FIND HIM BEFORE THEY DO AND WE WIN.
GET TO HIM FIRST.


HUH?
HEY!
I HOPE NOTHIN' BAD HAPPENED TO HIM.
KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING?
HEY!
MAYBE HE DOESN'T UNDER-STAND JAPANESE
He split.
Must be WELL.
THAT
SO, WHERE DID HE GO, YOU KNOW?
EVERYONE'S WORRIED ABOUT HIM. HE'S BEEN A NO-SHOW FOR AGES NOW.
I GO TO HIS CONDO EVERY DAY, BUT IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS HE HASN'T BEEN BACK.
BEEP
HE DIDN'T KNOW EITHER.
IT'S ME.
I JUST TALKED TO HIM.


.....
NAH. THEN IT WOULDN'T BE SO SATISFYING.
STILL, I THINK YOU'RE BEING PARANOID ABOUT THIS ULTIMATE BLUE OR WHATEVER IT IS.
YOU SHOULD'VE DUSTED THE KID EARLIER.
YOU HAD MILLIONS OF CHANCES.
MAYBE THEY HAD A FALLING OUT.
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW DANGEROUS ULTIMATE BLUE IS.
WHITE DRAGON WAS PROBABLY HONG KONG'S BIGGEST TRIAD. THEY TOOK IT OUT IN ONE DAY.
MY BROTHER LONTON WAS ONE OF THE BEST ASSASSINS IN THE WORLD. THEY TOOK HIM OUT LIKE IT WAS NOTHING.
YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW OLD THE PERSON WHO GAVE THE ORDERS IS?
MAYBE 16 OR 17.
NOW DO YOU KNOW HOW DANGEROUS ULTIMATE BLUE IS?
NEVER, EVER UNDERESTIMATE THEM.


FIND SHINGO TACHIBANA.
BEFORE ULTIMATE BLUE DOES.
Tsk!
YOU DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN.
BUT, I'M ON IT. I'LL CALL IF I GET SOMETHING.
CIAO FOR NOW.
Find him if you want the rest.
BEEP
SO? DID HE GO INTO HIDING, LAU?
SEEMS LIKE IT.

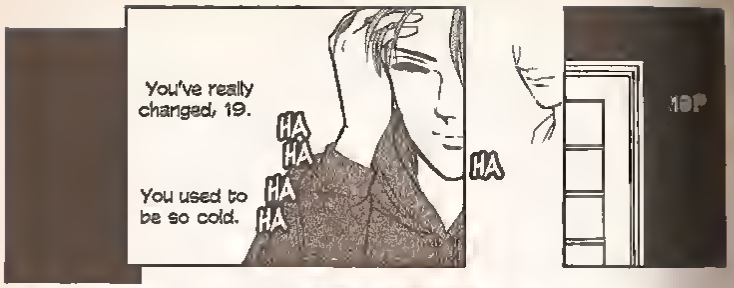

YOU'RE SHINGO'S FRIEND, RIGHT?
HI, SANO.
NUMBER 66 TO NUMBER 19.


EX-MERCENARIES CAN BE SO ARROGANT AT TIMES.
BUT STILL, YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT.
THE DON LIKES YOU.
OH, YEAH? WE GOT THE AMERICAN MOB BACKIN' US UP.
THE WHITE DRAGON WAS A BUNCH OF GERIATRIC WIMPS.
I COULD'VE TAKEN THEM OUT MYSELF.
NOT EVEN ULTIMATE BLUE WOULD SUSPECT OUR HIDEOUT TO BE THE ROYAL SUITE OF A FIVE-STAR HOTEL.
SURE, THE FAMILY OWNS THIS PLACE.
BUT REALLY, THE DON'S LENDING IT TO YOU, 'CAUSE HE THINKS YOU'RE THE REAL DEAL.
WE'RE PRETTY GOOD HIT MEN OURSELVES.
AND HE SHOULD. YOUR BROTHER MAY HAVE BEEN AN ACE KILLER.
BUT, YOU'RE ONE OF THE BEST WHEN IT COMES TO BOMBS.
WITH YOUR SKILLS AND OURS, IT'LL BE A PIECE OF CAKE. SO, CHILL OUT.
WE WOULDN'T BE HERE IF WE DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE GOOD.

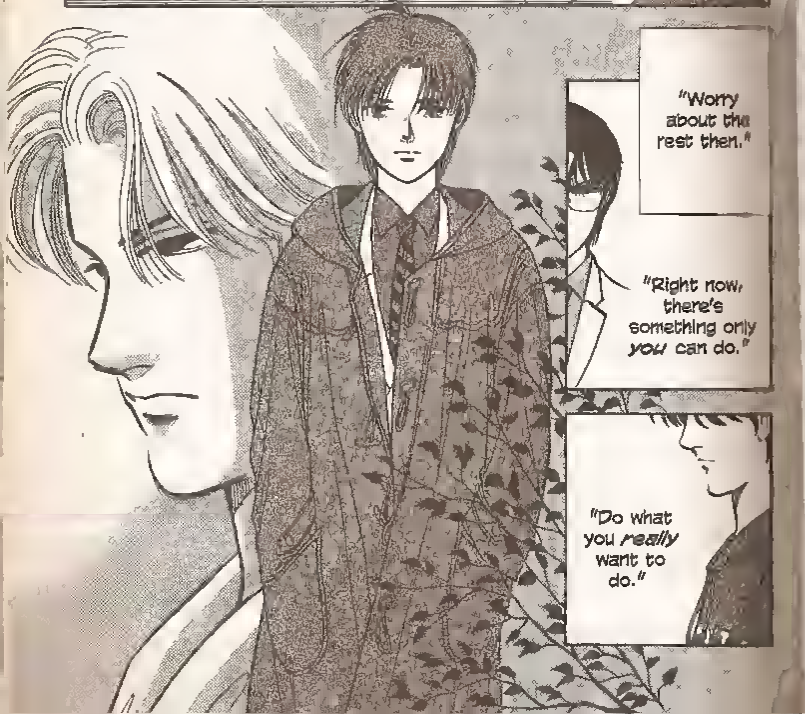

WHERE DO YOU THINK HE WENT?
WHERE DO YOU SUPPOSE HE WENT, NINE?
Nine?
I HAVE ULTIMATE BLUE'S JAPANESE TEAM ON IT.
IF HE DOESN'T RETURN HERE, HE'S NOT GOING TO SHOW AT SCHOOL EITHER, YEAH?
AND, IS THAT OKAY? SHINGO LEFT ON HIS OWN ACCORD.
EVEN IF WE FIND HIM, HE'S NOT GOING TO COME--
SO?!
SO, WHERE?
WE CHECKED WITH EVERYONE HE MIGHT CONTACT. FRIENDS. RELATIVES. BUT, HE HASN'T CONTACTED ANYONE.


AND, MAKE SURE NONE OF HIS FRIENDS GET HURT.
CONTINUE TO TRAIL HIM.
Roger.
COPY.
One of Leu's showed– just like we thought.
He's talking to Yuichi Sano, a friend of Tachibana.
SO, WE FOUND ONE OF THEM.
THEN, WE FIND THEM THE INSTANT WE LOSE HIM.
HOW IRONIC. WE COULDN'T FIND THEM WHEN WE HAD SHINGO.
YES. 66 AND 67 ARE ON IT.

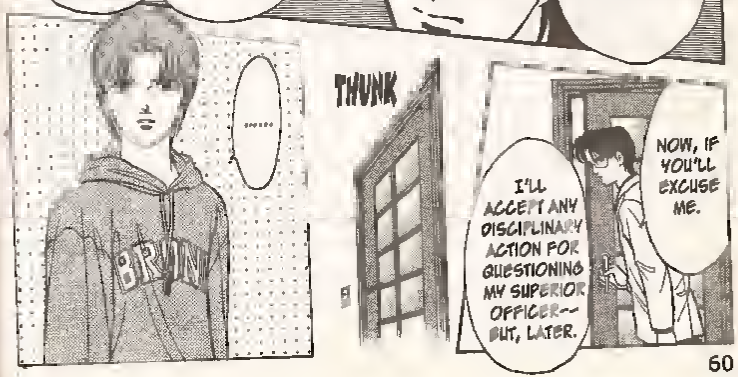

YOU'RE MY DOUBLE. YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW HOW IMPORTANT MY RESPONSIBILITIES ARE.
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO ABOUT IT?
MY MISSION IS TO CATCH LAU.
NOT TO LOOK FOR A MISSING PERSON.
YOU'VE BEEN WITH HIM FOR TOO LONG. YOU'RE STARTING TO SYMPATHIZE WITH HIM.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU DO. BUT, I CAN'T HAVE YOU FORGETTING THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE.
THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU AT ALL, 19.
WHAT ABOUT HOW HE FEELS?
THAT'S WHY I HAVE THE JAPANESE TEAM LOOKING FOR HIM.
YOUR MISSION IS TO PROTECT SHINGO.
IF ANYBODY HAS, IT'S YOU.
ME FORGET THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE?
WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP HIM THEN?
LIKE I SAID, HE--
SAID HE'D KILL HIMSELF?
THAT'S NOT AN EXCUSE-- AND YOU KNOW IT. YOU'RE NUMBER NINE OF ULTIMATE BLUE.
IT WOULD'VE BEEN VERY EASY FOR YOU TO HAVE STOPPED HIM THEN!
HIS OUTPOURING CAUGHT YOU FLATFOOTED.
SOMETHING INSIDE STOPPED YOU.
19.
THAT SOMETHING WAS YOUR FEELINGS TOWARD HIM!
YOU KNEW HE'D GET DEPRESSED. SO, YOU LET HIM GO!
YOU COULD'VE EASILY DISARMED HIM. BUT, THEN WHAT?!
19!
SWM
IT WAS YOU WHO PUT EMOTIONS BEFORE THE MISSION.
THAT'S ENOUGH, 19!


You've really changed, 19.
You used to be so cold.
HA HA HA HA
HA
19?

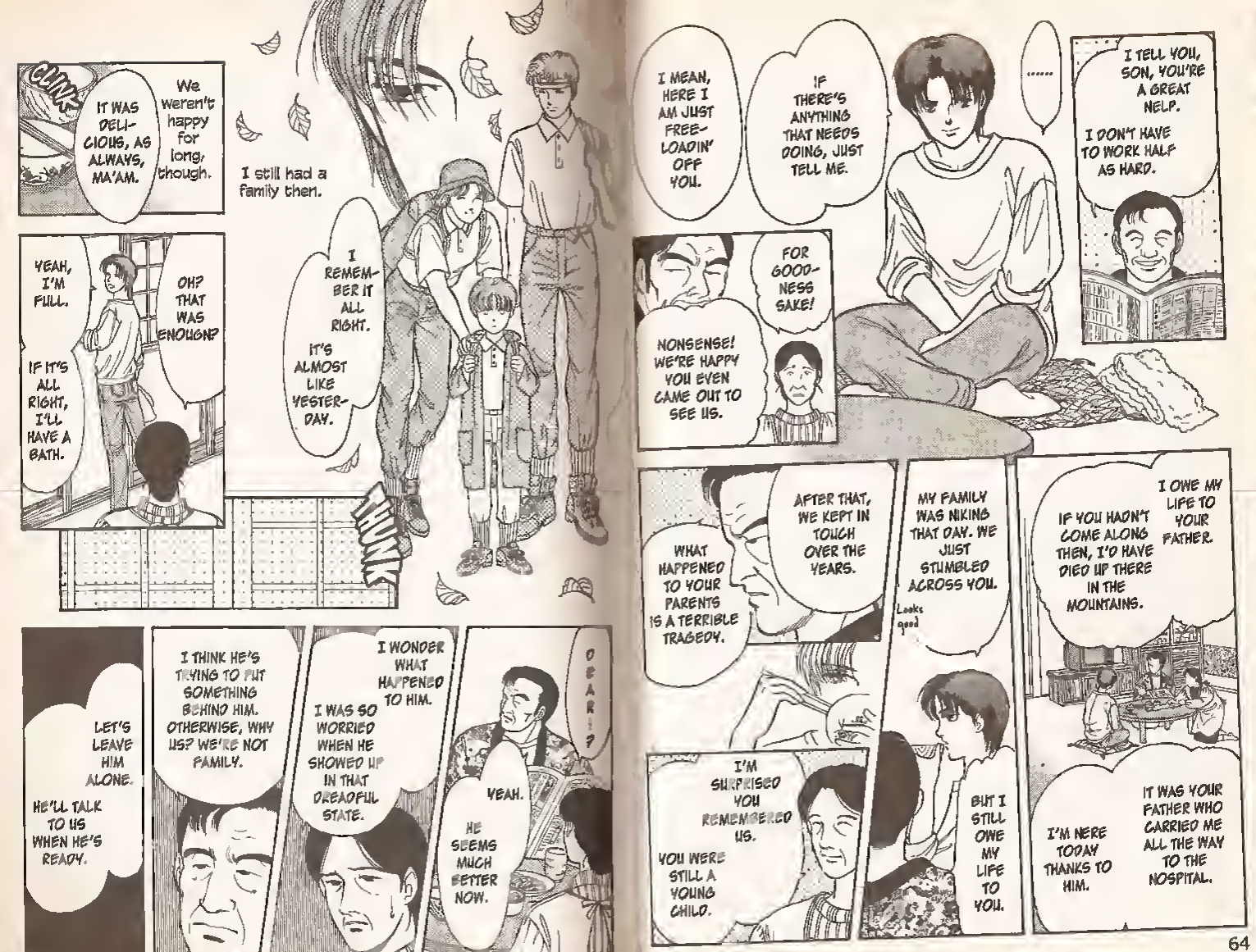

Maybe you're not the only one who's changed.
Me, too?

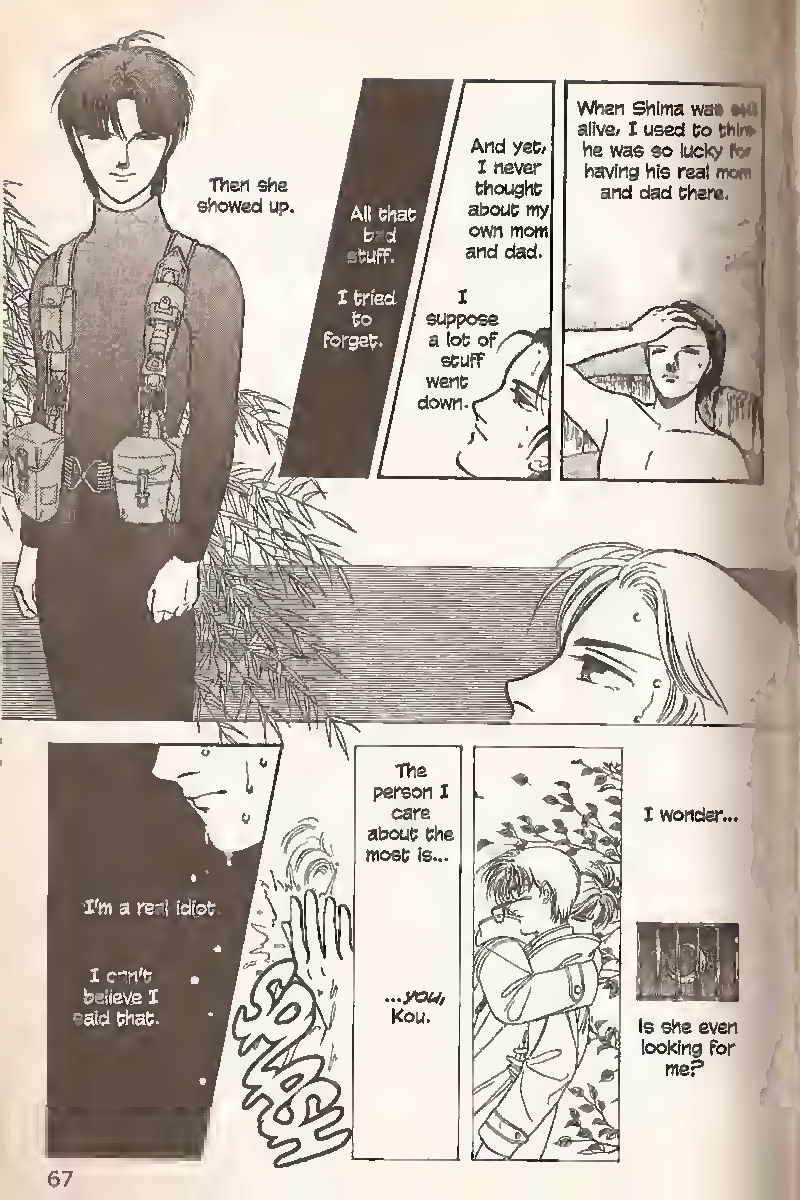

"Worry about the rest then."
"Right now, there's something only YOU can do."
"Do what you really want to do."

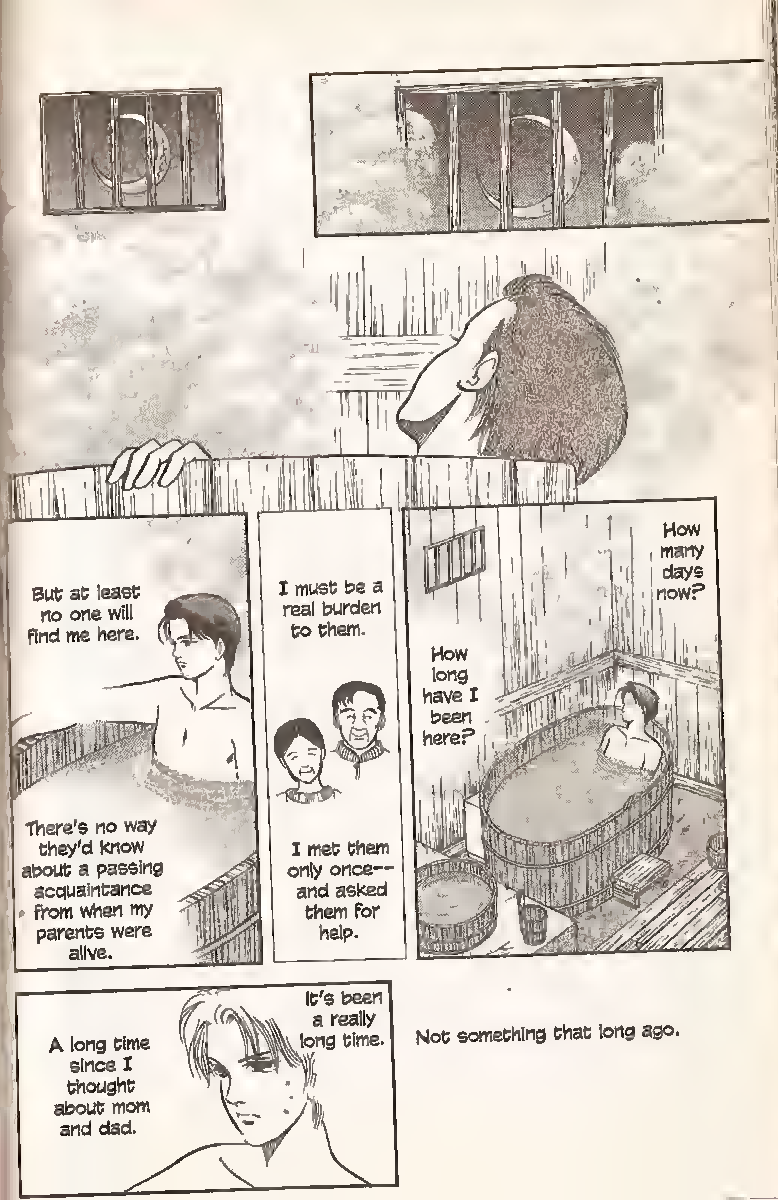

LET ME DEAL WITH FINDING LAU'S HIDEOUT.
I'M NOT YOUR DOUBLE FOR NOTHING
I CAN DO AT LEAST THAT MUCH
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAS TO FIND HIM.
SHINGO IS MISSING BECAUSE OF YOU.
DO WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO.
RIGHT NOW, THERE'S SOMETHING ONLY YOU CAN DO.
WORRY ABOUT THE REST THEN.

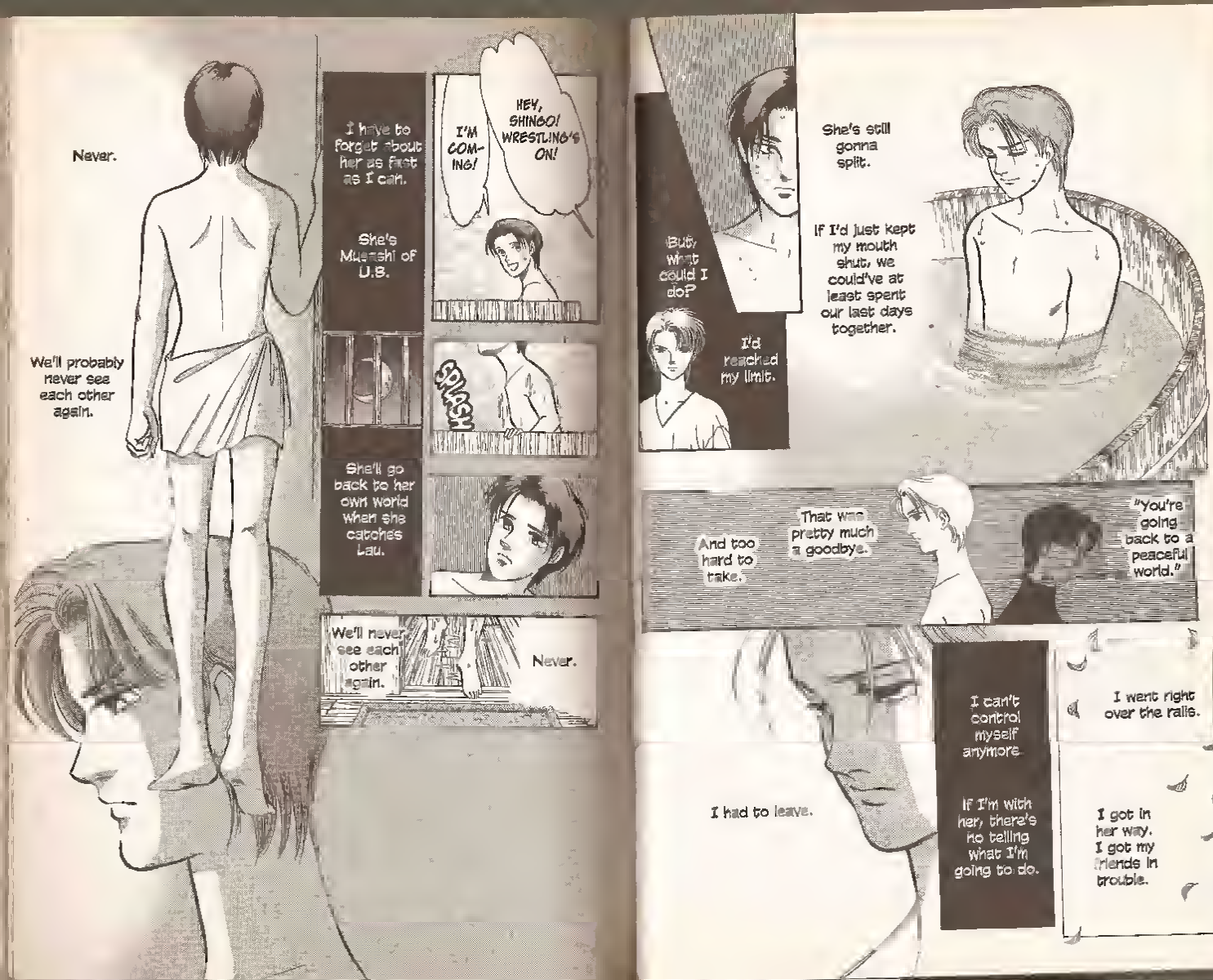

.....
THUNK
I'LL ACCEPT ANY DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR QUESTIONING MY SUPERIOR OFFICER--BUT, LATER.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.


OKAY. I'LL BE THERE IN A MINUTE.
THUNK
HEY! SHINGO! CALL IT A DAY! DINNER TIME!
PHEW.
CHOPPING WOOD'S A GOOD WORK-OUT.
YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN ENOUGH.
THANK YOU, SHINGO. WHY DON'T YOU HAVE A BATH AFTER DINNER?
THANKS, MA'AM. I WILL.
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOOP
RATTLE
DINNER'S READY.
RIGHT. I'LL GO AND GET HIM.


I MEAN, HERE I AM JUST FREE-LOADIN' OFF YOU.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING THAT NEEDS DOING, JUST TELL ME.
.....
I TELL YOU, SON, YOU'RE A GREAT HELP.
I DON'T HAVE TO WORK HALF AS HARD.
FOR GOODNESS SAKE!
NONSENSE! WE'RE HAPPY YOU EVEN CAME OUT TO SEE US.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR PARENTS IS A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY.
AFTER THAT, WE KEPT IN TOUCH OVER THE YEARS.
MY FAMILY WAS HIKING THAT DAY. WE JUST STUMBLED ACROSS YOU.
Looks good
I'M SURPRISED YOU REMEMBERED US.
YOU WERE STILL A YOUNG CHILD.
BUT I STILL OWE MY LIFE TO YOU.
IF YOU HADN'T COME ALONG THEN, I'D HAVE DIED UP THERE IN THE MOUNTAINS.
I OWE MY LIFE TO YOUR FATHER.
I'M HERE TODAY THANKS TO HIM.
IT WAS YOUR FATHER WHO CARRIED ME ALL THE WAY TO THE HOSPITAL.
CLINK
IT WAS DELICIOUS, AS ALWAYS, MA'AM.
We weren't happy for long, though.
I still had a family then.
I REMEMBER IT ALL RIGHT.
IT'S ALMOST LIKE YESTERDAY.
YEAH, I'M FULL.
OH? THAT WAS ENOUGH?
IF IT'S ALL RIGHT, I'LL HAVE A BATH.
THUNK
LET'S LEAVE HIM ALONE.
HE'LL TALK TO US WHEN HE'S READY.
I THINK HE'S TRYING TO PUT SOMETHING BEHIND HIM. OTHERWISE, WHY US? WE'RE NOT FAMILY.
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.
I WAS SO WORRIED WHEN HE SHOWED UP IN THAT DREADFUL STATE.
D E A R ?
YEAH.
HE SEEMS MUCH BETTER NOW.


Then she showed up.
All that bad stuff.
I tried to forget.
And yet, I never thought about my own mom and dad.
I suppose a lot of stuff went down.
When Shima was still alive, I used to think he was so lucky for having his real mom and dad there.
I'm a real idiot.
I can't believe I said that.
SOBBING
The person I care about the most is...
...you, Kou.
I wonder...
Is she even looking for me?

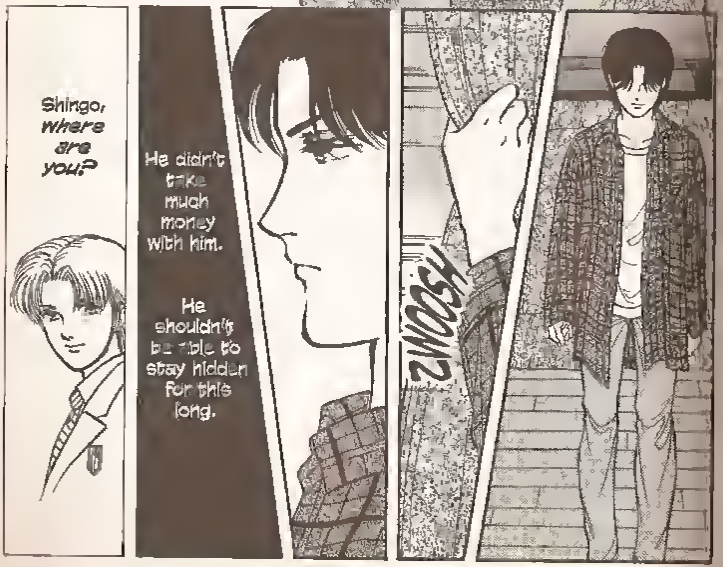

But at least no one will find me here.
There's no way they'd know about a passing acquaintance from when my parents were alive.
I must be a real burden to them.
I met them only once-- and asked them for help.
How long have I been here?
How many days now?
A long time since I thought about mom and dad.
It's been a really long time.
Not something that long ago.

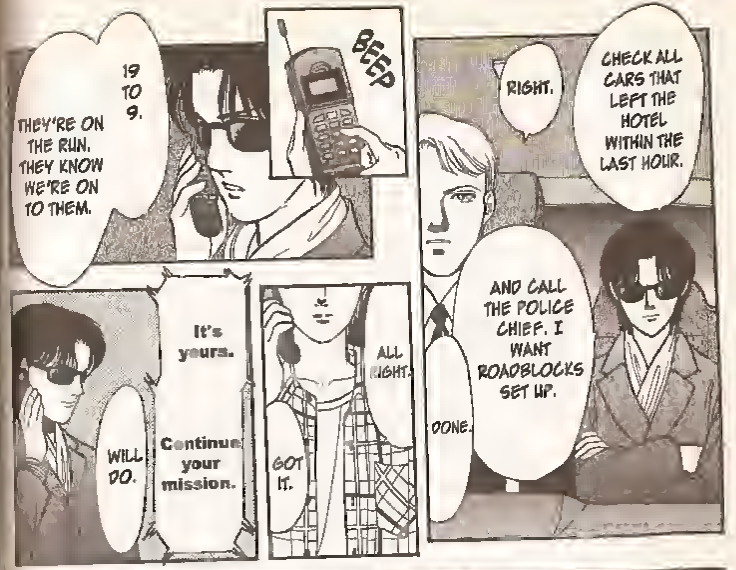

Never.
We'll probably never see each other again.
I have to forget about her as fast as I can.
She's Musashi of U.B.
She'll go back to her own world when she catches Lau.
We'll never see each other again.
Never.
I'M COMING!
HEY, SHINGO! WRESTLING'S ON!
SPLASH
But what could I do?
I'd reached my limit.
She's still gonna split.
If I'd just kept my mouth shut, we could've at least spent our last days together.
And too hard to take.
That was pretty much a goodbye.
"You're going back to a peaceful world."
I had to leave.
I can't control myself anymore.
If I'm with her, there's no telling what I'm going to do.
I went right over the rails.
I got in her way. I got my friends in trouble.

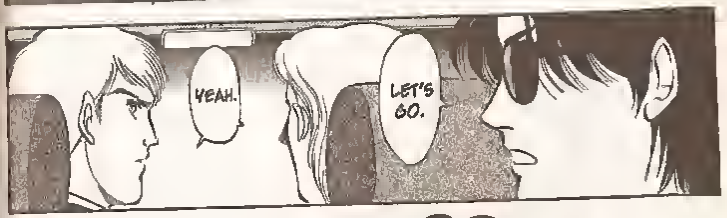

OOOF
THEIR MORNING COFFEE WAS STILL WARM.
THE IDIOTS LEFT IN A HURRY.
COPY.
YES.
YOU'RE FINISHED THERE.
33 TO 19.
NO ONE WAS HERE.
THE ROOM WAS EMPTY.

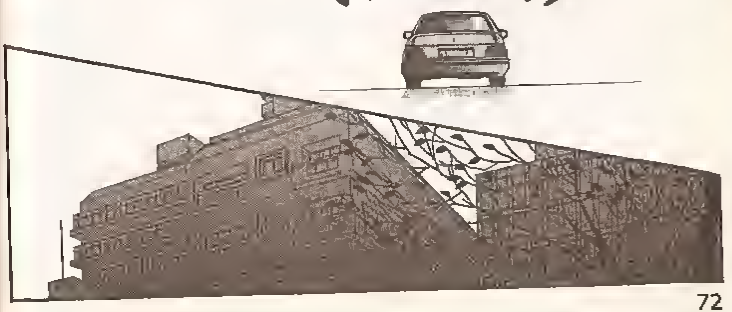

SQUEAK SQUEAK
SQUEAK SQUEAK
ROYAL SUITE
EXCUSE ME. HOUSE-CLEANING.
CLICK


RECORDS OF ALL HOTELS SEARCHED. RENTAL HOUSING RECORDS SEARCHED.
NO TRACE OF A TACHIBANA, SHINGO.

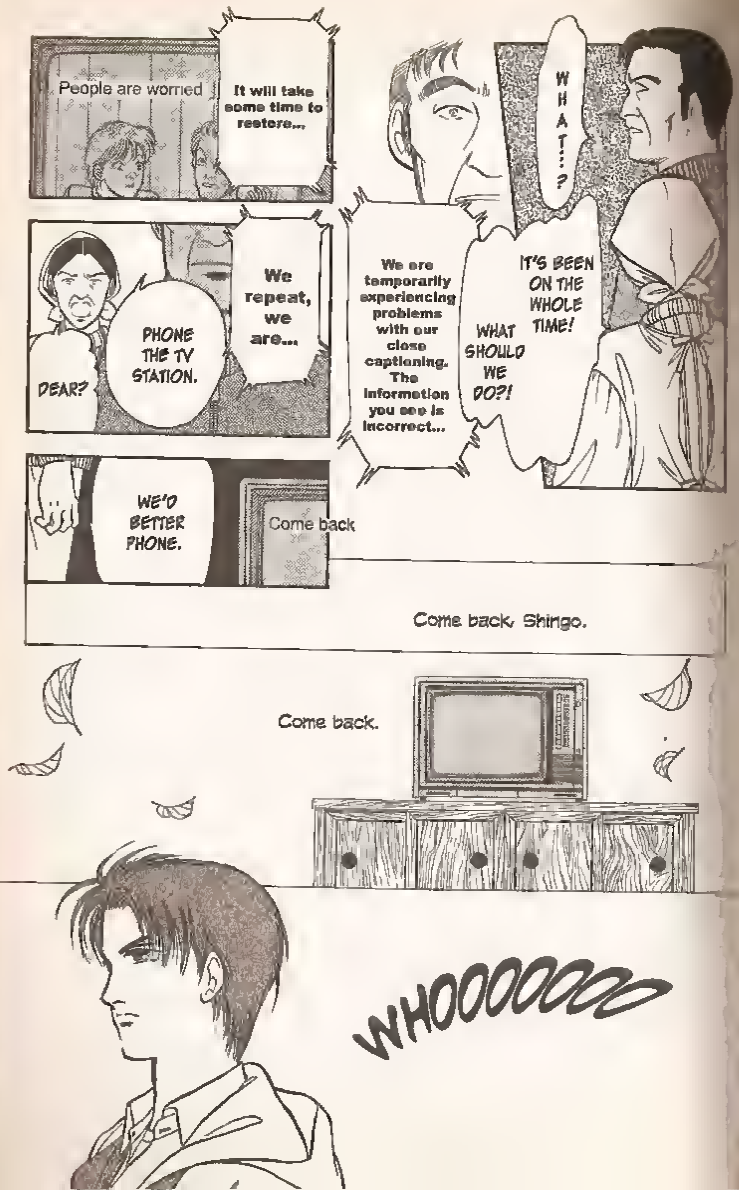

Shingo, where are you?
He didn't take much money with him.
He shouldn't be able to stay hidden for this long.
HSSHH


BEEP
19 TO 9.
THEY'RE ON THE RUN. THEY KNOW WE'RE ON TO THEM.
RIGHT.
CHECK ALL CARS THAT LEFT THE HOTEL WITHIN THE LAST HOUR.
AND CALL THE POLICE CHIEF. I WANT ROADBLOCKS SET UP.
DONE.
ALL RIGHT.
GOT IT.
It's yours.
Continue your mission.
WILL DO.

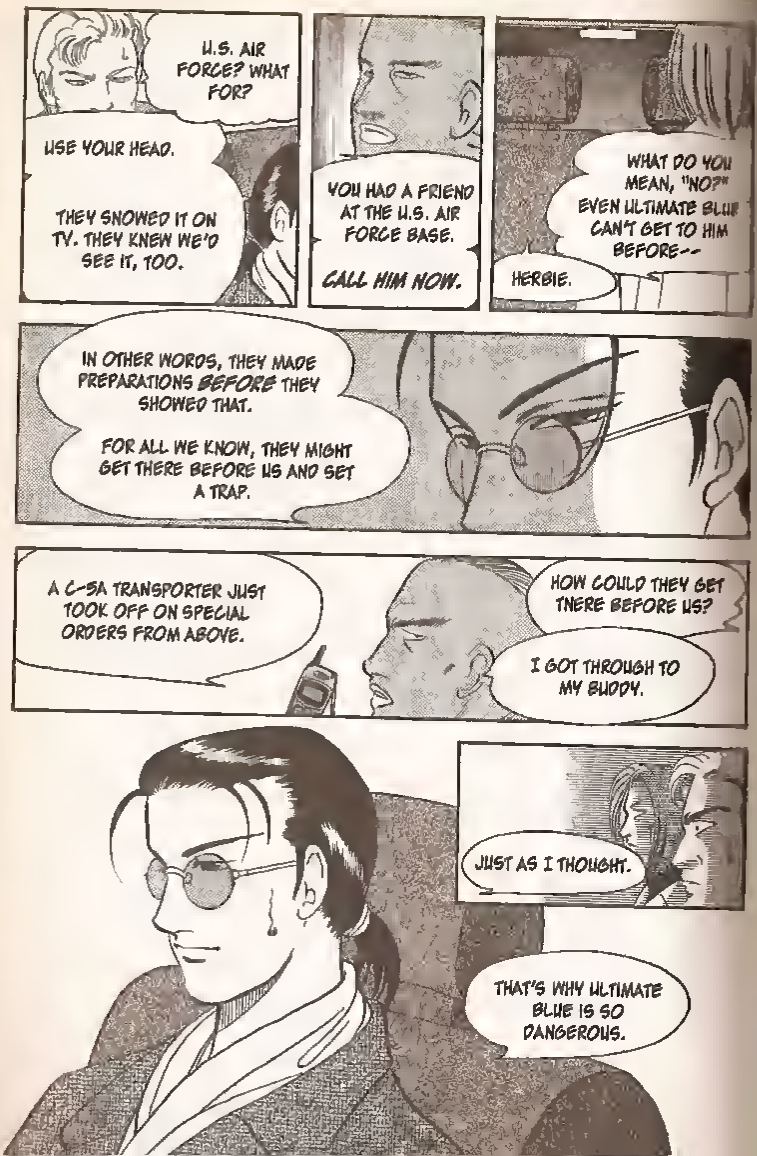

YEAH.
LET'S GO.

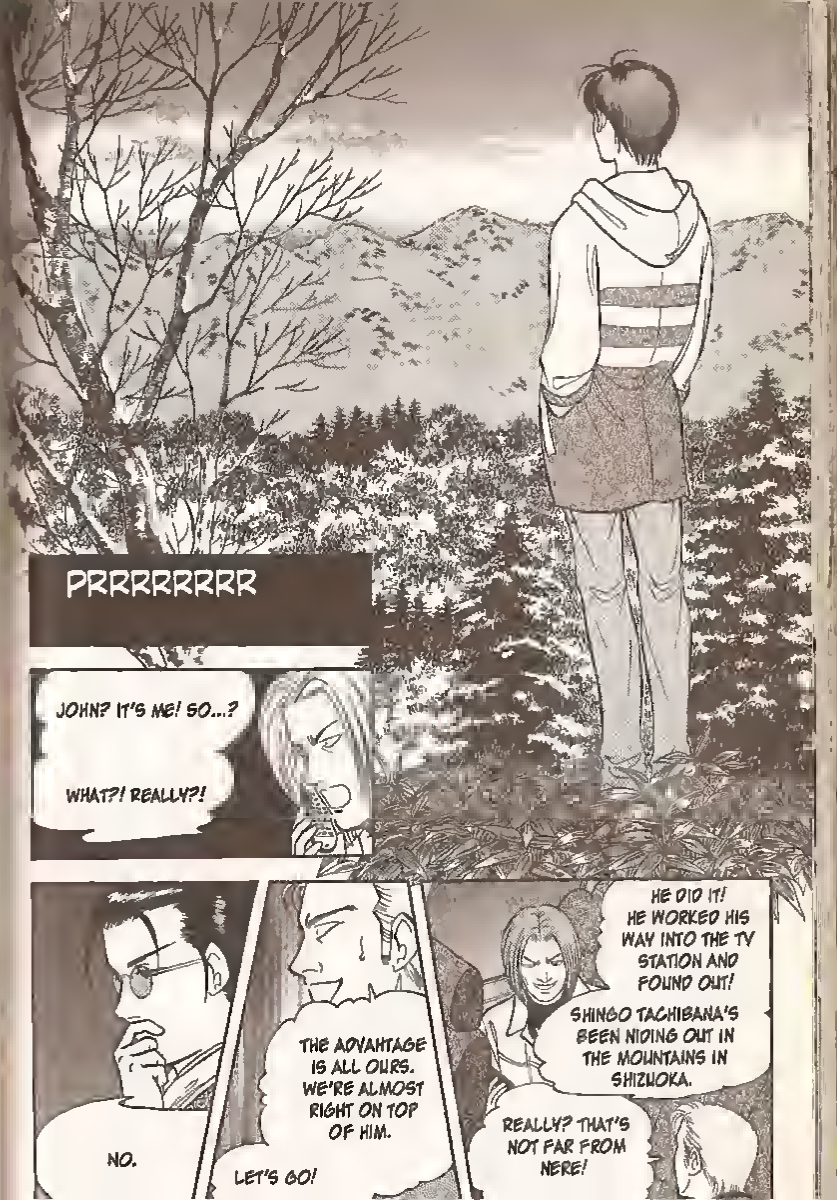

VROOOM

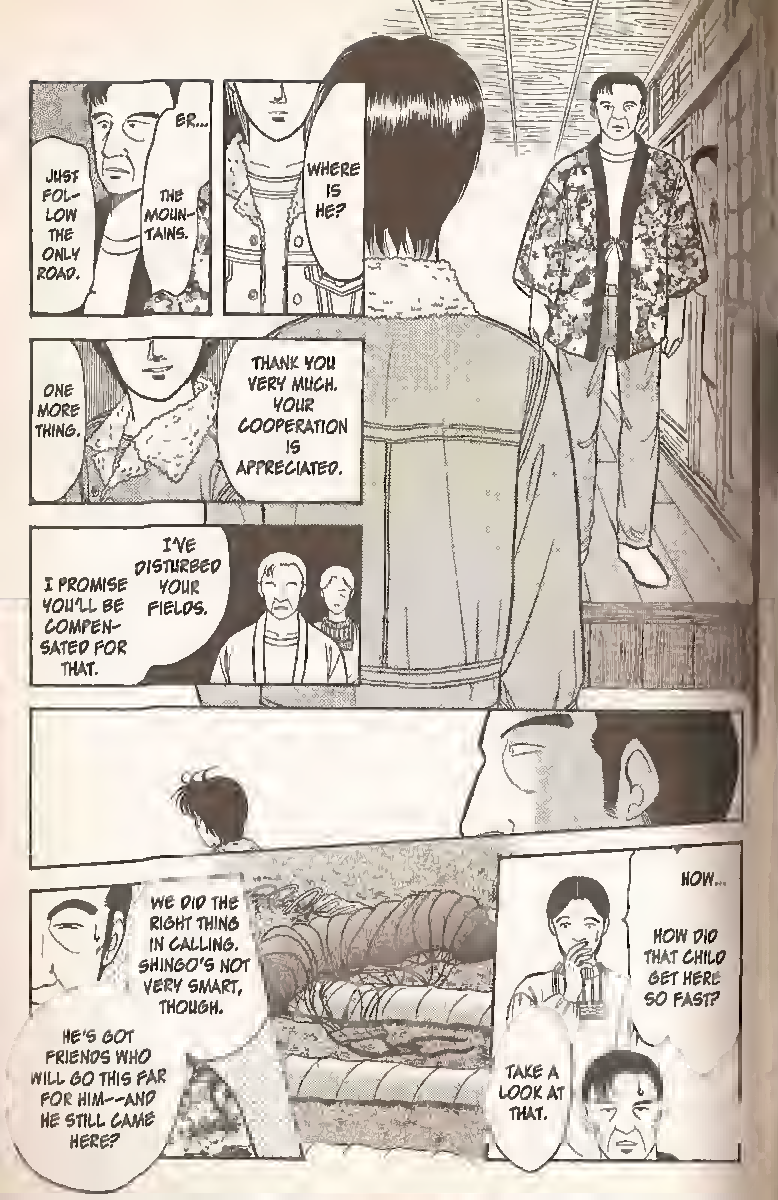

WE HAVE TO FIND SHINGO TACHIBANA FIRST.
ULTIMATE BLUE WON'T BE ABLE TO TOUCH US THEN.
YEAH, BUT THAT'S--
RRRRRR
SO? WHAT DO WE DO? IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY FIND US!
AS LONG AS WE'RE MOVING, THEY WON'T FIND US. I HAVE OTHER CARS READY.
ARMY
THAT'S WHAT I'M CALLING ABOUT.
ULTIMATE BLUE IS DOING SOMETHING PRETTY EXTREME.
OH. IT'S YOU.
FIND SHINGO YET?
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE. JUST LOOK AT ANY TV.
HURRY!
EXTREME? IN WHAT WAY?
You heve a TV there?
NO. WE'RE IN A CAR RIGHT NOW.
But, it's worth a shot.
It's a bit of a gamble.
.....
MAN, THAT WAS TOO CLOSE.
VROOM
WE'D HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IF WE HADN'T SET UP AN ESCAPE ROUTE FIRST.
THEY'VE EVEN GOT ROADBLOCKS UP.
I TOLD YOU NEVER TO UNDERESTIMATE THEM.
IT'S ME.
BEEP
PUT ME THROUGH TO THE MINISTRY OF POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS.
RIGHT NOW.


People are worried
It will take some time to restore...
WHAT...?
We are temporarily experiencing problems with our close captioning. The information you see is incorrect...
IT'S BEEN ON THE WHOLE TIME!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?!
DEAR?
PHONE THE TV STATION.
We repeat, we are...
WE'D BETTER PHONE.
Come back
Come back, Shingo.
Come back.
WHOOOOOO


DEAR!
YOU HAVE TO SEE THIS ON TV!
HURRY INSIDE!
HE SAID HE WAS GOING FOR A WALK.
WENT UP INTO THE MOUN-TAINS.
WHERE'S SHINGO?!
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT ARE YOU ALL WORKED UP ABOUT?
MHK NEWS FLASH
TACHIBANA SHINGO IS BEING SOUGHT FOR HIS OWN PROTECTION ANYBODY WHO HAS SEEN HIM IS ASKED TO CONTACT THE AUTHORITIES IMMEDIATELY


U.S. AIR FORCE? WHAT FOR?
USE YOUR HEAD.
THEY SNOWED IT ON TV. THEY KNEW WE'D SEE IT, TOO.
YOU HAD A FRIEND AT THE U.S. AIR FORCE BASE.
CALL HIM NOW.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "NO?" EVEN ULTIMATE BLUE CAN'T GET TO HIM BEFORE--
HERBIE.
IN OTHER WORDS, THEY MADE PREPARATIONS BEFORE THEY SHOWED THAT.
FOR ALL WE KNOW, THEY MIGHT GET THERE BEFORE US AND SET A TRAP.
A C-5A TRANSPORTER JUST TOOK OFF ON SPECIAL ORDERS FROM ABOVE.
HOW COULD THEY GET THERE BEFORE US?
I GOT THROUGH TO MY BUDDY.
JUST AS I THOUGHT.
THAT'S WHY ULTIMATE BLUE IS SO DANGEROUS.


PRRRRRRR
JOHN? IT'S ME! SO...?
WHAT?! REALLY?!
NO.
LET'S GO!
THE ADVANTAGE IS ALL OURS. WE'RE ALMOST RIGHT ON TOP OF HIM.
REALLY? THAT'S NOT FAR FROM HERE!
HE DID IT! HE WORKED HIS WAY INTO THE TV STATION AND FOUND OUT!
SHINGO TACHIBANA'S BEEN HIDING OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS IN SHIZUOKA.


JUST FOLLOW THE ONLY ROAD.
ER...
THE MOUNTAINS.
WHERE IS HE?
ONE MORE THING.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH. YOUR COOPERATION IS APPRECIATED.
I'VE DISTURBED YOUR FIELDS.
I PROMISE YOU'LL BE COMPENSATED FOR THAT.
WE DID THE RIGHT THING IN CALLING. SHINGO'S NOT VERY SMART, THOUGH.
HE'S GOT FRIENDS WHO WILL GO THIS FAR FOR HIM--AND HE STILL CAME HERE?
HOW...
HOW DID THAT CHILD GET HERE SO FAST?
TAKE A LOOK AT THAT.


VOOOOOOOO
NOTHING THAT BIG EVER FLIES AROUND HERE.
SOUNDS LIKE A BIG PLANE.
.....
EXCUSE ME.
RATTLE RATTLE
BUT, BUT--
HOW COULD YOU HAVE CALLED WITHOUT TALKING TO THAT BOY FIRST?
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM?
I JUST PHONED NOW.
IT'S NOT AS IF THEY CAN GET HERE JUST LIKE THAT.
WE'LL HAVE LOTS OF TIME TO TALK.
BUT, ARE YOU THE PEOPLE WHO CALLED?
I'M SORRY TO INTRUDE UNANNOUNCED.


MAYBE IF I STAY HERE LONG ENOUGH I'LL BE ABLE TO FORGET.
JUST MAYBE.
FORGET ABOUT ALL THIS PAIN.
SLIP
FORGET ABOUT ALL--
RUSTLE
PSHHH
GRRRRR
Oh, man!
I'm gonna fall!
A cliff?


RUSTLE
THE SOUND OF A MOUNTAIN STREAM. THE COLD OF THE MOUNTAIN AIR.
IT'S LIKE AN OASIS FROM REALITY.
I've never been this high up. I must be near the top.
I don't remember this place, though.
RUSTLE
UPON THE MOUNTAIN....
...THE LAST OF THE DAY FALLS.
WHAT A KID.
DROPPED OUT OF THE SKY TO PICK UP SHINGO.

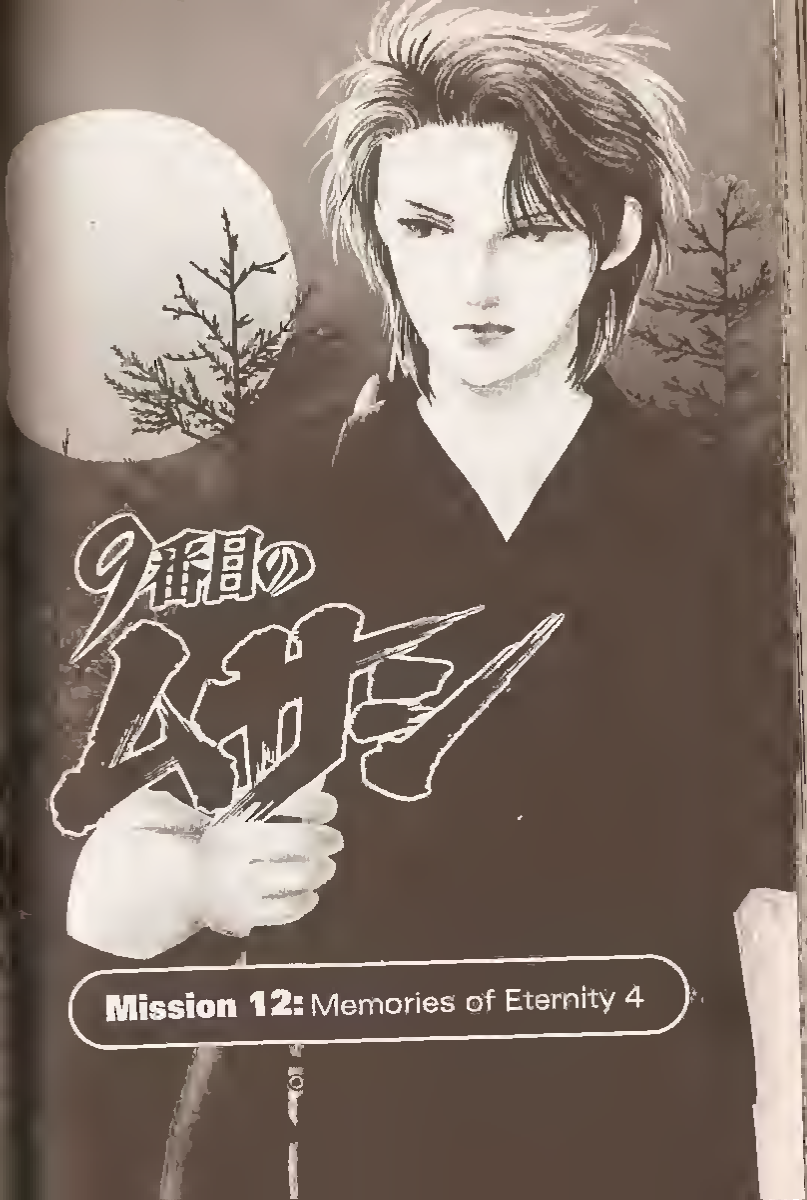

I'M HERE.
FOR YOU, SHINGO.
UPON THE MOUNTAINS THE LAST OF THE DAY FALLS.


THUMP
I'LL RUN!
WOOOT
SNAP
SNAP
I CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU FOR A SECOND.
YOU REALLY DO GET INTO TROUBLE A LOT.
SHINGO, SHINGO.



End of Mission 12 Memories of Eternity 3





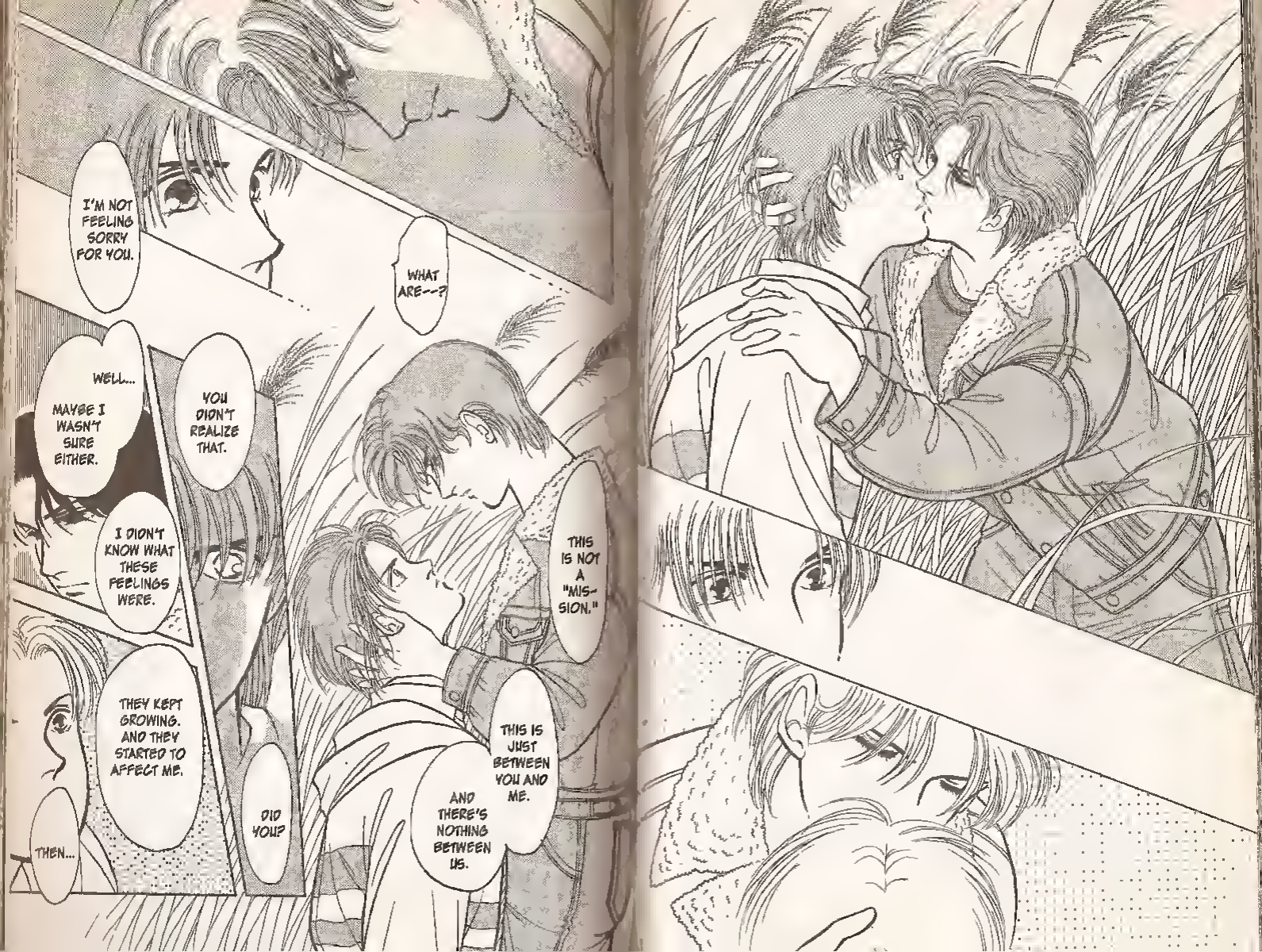
Mission 12: Memories of Eternity 4


BEEP
OH, YEAH. I GET IT NOW.
CAN'T HAVE "SHINOZUKA KOU" MISSING SCHOOL EITHER, HUH?
IT'S LIKE RIGHT OUT OF THE MOVIES.
PRETTY WILD.
UNTIL THEN, DON'T TAKE YOUR EYES OFF THEM.
WE'LL WAIT FOR FURTHER ORDERS FROM NINE.


YES. THAT, TOO. I HAVE TO PUT THAT PLAN INTO PLACE.
BUT, ANYWAY, WHAT'S THE ENEMY DOING, 29?
They know where he is. They're at the foot of the mountains.
But, they haven't made a move beyond that.
Maybe they're waiting for something.
THEY PROBABLY CAUGHT ON TO NINE BEING THERE.
THEY'RE NOT SO STUPID THEY'LL TRY SOMETHING WITH NINE THERE


RUSTLE
HELP ME.
I HAVE TO SAVE SHINGO.
.....
ALL RIGHT. BUT, FIRST THING'S FIRST.
I NEED A FAVOR.
WHERE THE HECK DID YOU TAKE SHINGO?
TIME KEEPS ON TICKING.
TICKING TOWARD THE
A ONE-IN-A-MILLION CHANCE OF MEETING.
THE PARTING DETERMINED LONG AGO.
THE DAYS KEEP PASSING.
WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK ABOUT AS THEY GO ON?
THE LASTING PAIN. THE ENDLESS SORROW.
WHERE DO YOU PUT IT ALL?
I USED TO GET DIFFERENT VIBES FROM SHINOZUKA ON DIFFERENT DAYS.
AND NOW THIS CALL?
IT ALL MAKES SENSE NOW.
NO WONDER SHINGO CALLED YOU SHINOZUKA AND ONE-NINER.
SHINO-ZUKA KOU.
THERE'S MORE THAN ONE, ISN'T THERE?
ANSWER ME!
JUST WHO IS SHINO-ZUKA KOU?!
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, A LOT OF STUFF JUST DIDN'T ADD UP, YEAH?
THERE WERE THINGS ABOUT SHINOZUKA THAT JUST WEREN'T RIGHT.
THE WAY HE WORRIED ABOUT SHINGO? THAT WASN'T NORMAL.
AND, THE BOMB STUFF.
THE BOMB NEVER MADE IT TO THE OFFICE. BESIDES, MOST PEOPLE DON'T GO AROUND DISARMING BOMBS LIKE IT WAS NOTHING.


STAY AWAY!
DON'T COME NEAR ME!
IF YOU TAKE ANOTHER STEP, I'M GONNA JUMP!
.....
I WON'T STOP YOU THEN.
I'LL JUMP AFTER YOU.
WHY? WHY?
WHY ARE YOU HERE?
WHY WON'T YOU LEAVE ME ALONE?
I DO.
NO, YOU DON'T!
YOU'RE MUSASHI OF U.B.!
WHY DO YOU THINK I TOOK OFF IN THE FIRST PLACE?
DON'T YOU KNOW WHY?
WE'RE NOT EVEN ON THE SAME PLANET!
IT'D NEVER MATTER HOW MUCH I LOVED YOU!
WHEN THE MISSION'S OVER, YOU'RE JUST GONNA TAKE OFF!
YOU'RE JUST... (SOB) ...GONNA SPLIT...
AND, FORGET ABOUT ME.

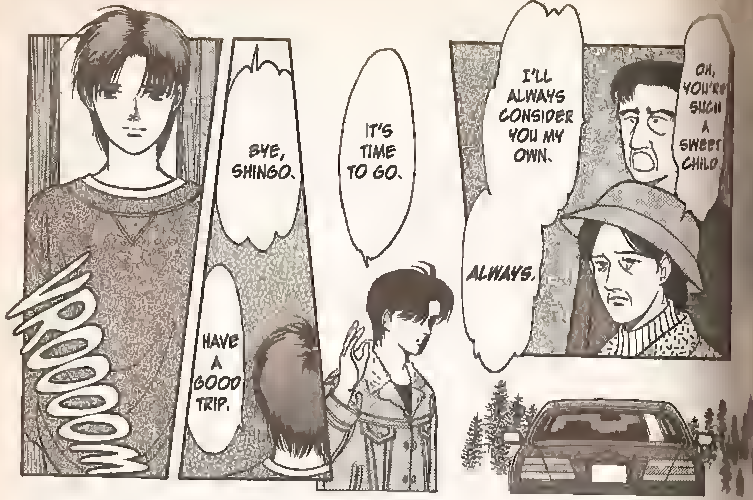

I'M NOT FEELING SORRY FOR YOU.
WHAT ARE--?
WELL... MAYBE I WASN'T SURE EITHER.
YOU DIDN'T REALIZE THAT.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THESE FEELINGS WERE.
THEY KEPT GROWING. AND THEY STARTED TO AFFECT ME.
THEN...
DID YOU?
AND THERE'S NOTHING BETWEEN US.
THIS IS JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME.
THIS IS NOT A "MIS-SION."

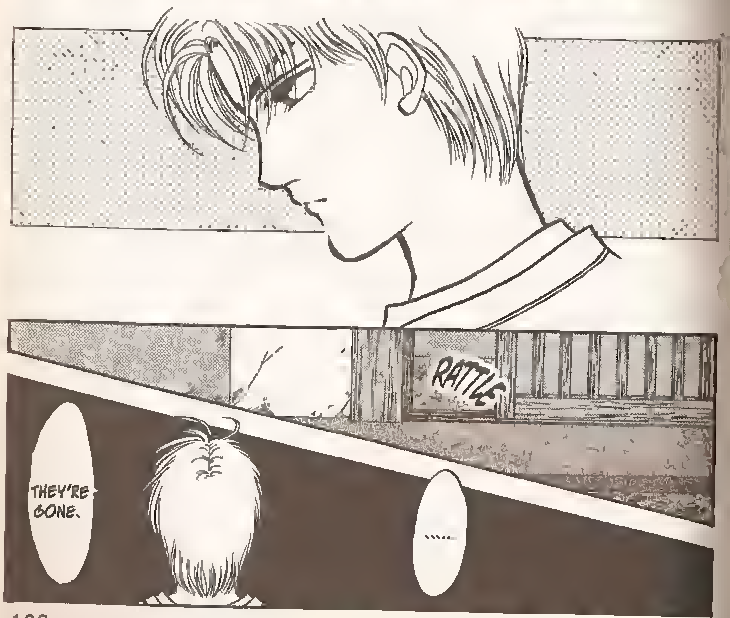

RUSTLE RUSTLE
GRMD
GNISH
HERE.
I BROUGHT SOMETHING TO EAT.
YOU'D BETTER NOT HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED.
YOU THINK I'D DO SOMETHING THAT STUPID?
LOOK AT YOU SAD IDIOTS.
THUNK
IT'S NO LONGER ABOUT GETTING THE KID.


IS THERE A WAY WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO STAY TOGETHER?
I STARTED TO IMAGINE.
...I'D START TO THINK..
EVERY TIME YOU'D BE HONEST WITH ME...
.....
I...
I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU.
BELIEVE ME.


SEE YOU LATER.
I'LL CALL IF ANYTHING POPS UP.
ALL RIGHT, JUST CHILL.
WE HAVE TO GET GOING, TOO.
THUNK
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS TO STAY IN ONE PLACE FOR LONG.
ULTIMATE BLUE MAY ALREADY KNOW WE'RE HERE.
WHY US?
WE JUST FOUND A PERFECT HIDEOUT.
IT'S SAFER TO BE ON THE MOVE.
AND DON'T FORGET.
OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO GET SHINGO TACHIBANA.
WE CAN'T LET OUR GUARD DOWN UNTIL THEN.


SO NOW WHAT, LAU?
WITH THAT ULTIMATE BLUE KID AROUND, YOU CAN'T TOUCH TACHIBANA.
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT GIVING UP?
YOU GONNA GIVE UP YOUR VENDETTA?
CLICK
IF ANYONE KNOWS ULTIMATE BLUE IS NOT TO BE MESSED WITH, IT'S ME.
BUT I STILL CHOSE TO ATTACK THEM. DON'T FORGET THAT.
A MOUNTAIN STAKEOUT IS HARD EVEN ON ME.
A FOREIGNER LIKE ME STICKS OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB AS IT IS.
JUST SHUT UP AND GO! IT'S YOUR JOB!
WE'LL GET OUR CHANCE IF WE WAIT LONG ENOUGH.
JOHN, GET GOING.
WAUGH!


KA-BOOOM
BYE, SHINGO.
HAVE A GOOD TRIP.
IT'S TIME TO GO.
I'LL ALWAYS CONSIDER YOU MY OWN.
ALWAYS.
OH, YOU'RE SUCH A SWEET CHILD

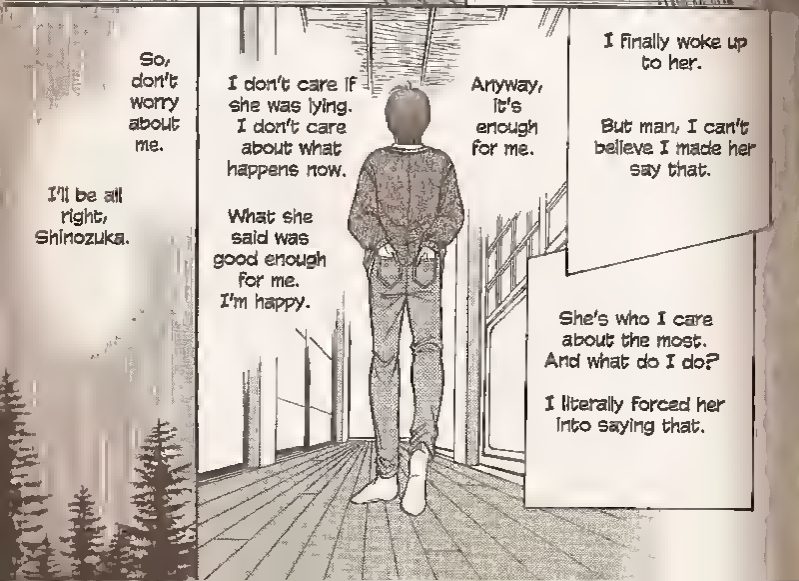

RATTLE
THEY'RE GONE.
.....

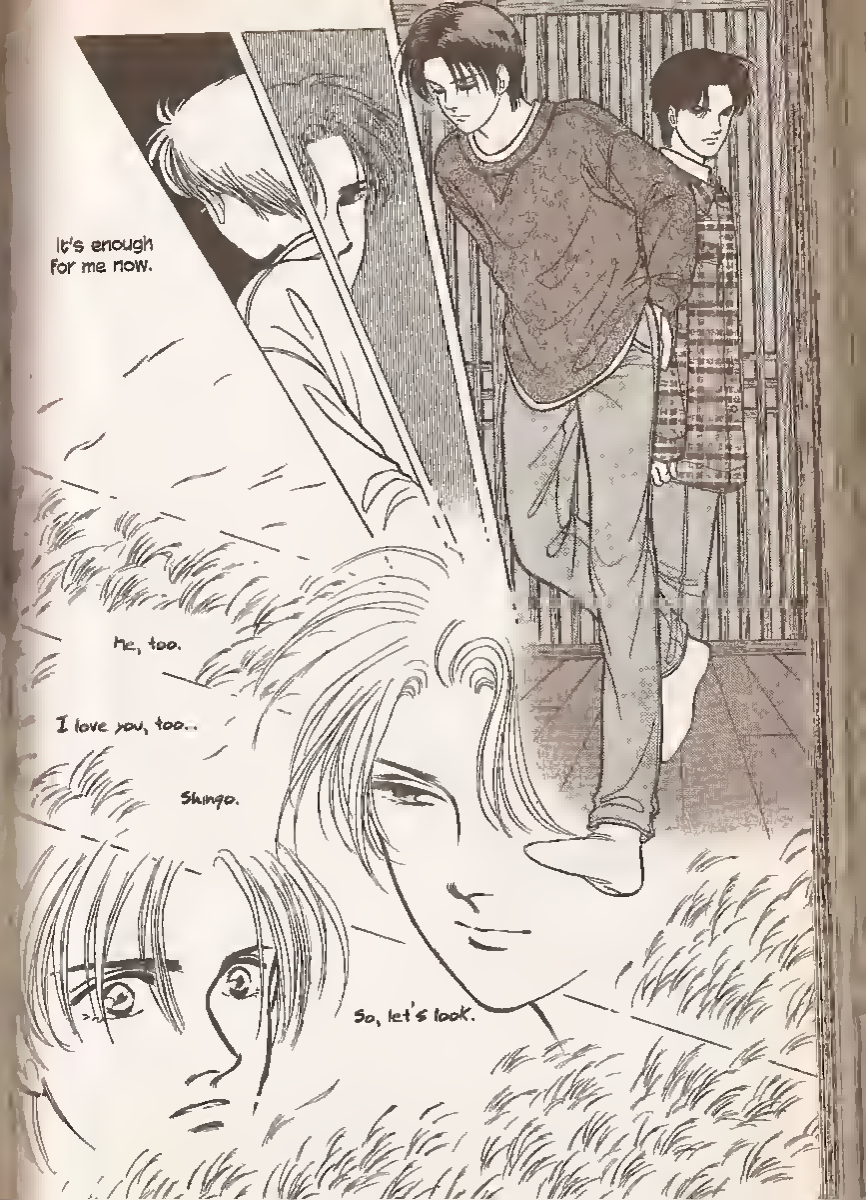

RATTLE RATTLE
OF COURSE NOT. I OWE YOU FOR SO MUCH, THIS WAS THE LEAST I COULD DO.
BESIDES, I LOST MY PARENTS.
I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO SAY THANKS TO THEM. I DO WITH YOU, THOUGH.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, BUT THANK YOU. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO PAY FOR THIS VACATION.
NOW WE OWE YOU, AGAIN.
HAVE A GOOD TRIP.
I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR HOUSE.


.....
AND THEY WERE REALLY HAPPY TO BE GOING ON VACATION.
WELL, I REALLY AM GRATEFUL TO THOSE TWO.
I'M THE BAIT.
I'M COOL WITH IT.
THAT'S WHY I'M HELPING, YEAH?
WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS, OR ELSE I'LL GET THOSE TWO INVOLVED.
Oh, Shingo.
JUST CONCENTRATE ON CATCHING LAU.
I'VE ALREADY MADE UP MY MIND, SO DON'T STOP ME.


JUST HOW MANY DOUBLES DO YOU HAVE, SHINOZUKA?
I DON'T KNOW. I'VE NEVER COUNTED.
BUT, NOT MANY ARE AS GOOD AS 19.
SNIN-GO?
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
IT HAS TO LOOK LIKE I'M THE ONLY ONE HERE.
WELL, WHATEVER. YOU'D BETTER STAY HIDDEN.
THE PLAN WON'T WORK IF THEY SEE YOU.
.....


Let's look together
Maybe we can find a way.


So, don't worry about me.
I'll be all right, Shimozuka.
I don't care if she was lying. I don't care about what happens now.
What she said was good enough for me. I'm happy.
Anyway, it's enough for me.
I finally woke up to her.
But man, I can't believe I made her say that.
She's who I care about the most. And what do I do?
I literally forced her into saying that.

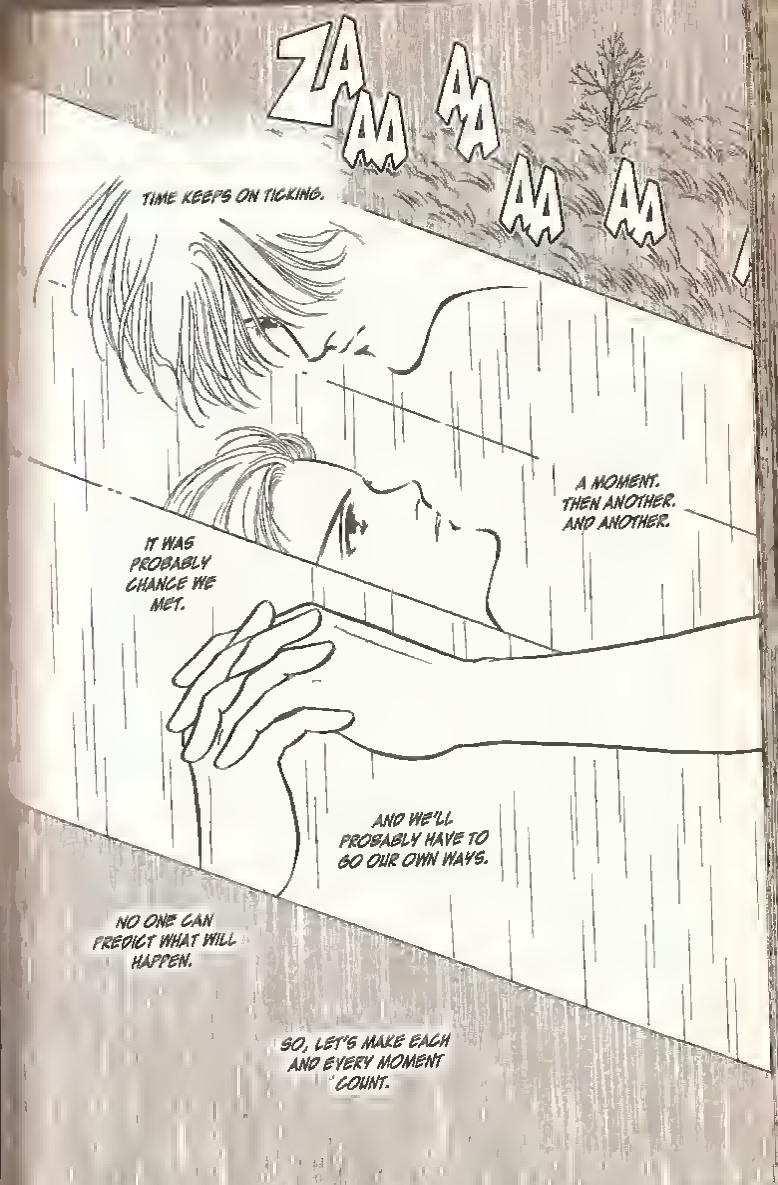

It's enough for me now.
Me, too.
I love you, too..
Shingo.
So, let's look.


IT'S A TRAP.
THERE'S NO WAY SHINGO WOULD BE LEFT UNPROTECTED.
THEY'RE JUST WAITING FOR US.
HERE'S THE CHANCE TO KIDNAP THE KID!
WE'LL GET HIM BEFORE THE OTHER ONE GETS BACK.
.....
LET'S GO, LAU!
THAT'S RIGHT, MAN! IT'S OBVIOUS HE'S NOT THERE.
WE CAN TAKE CARE OF THE SMALL FRY.
SO WHAT? IF IT'S A TRAP, WE'LL BLOW THEM AWAY.
LET'S GO.
I've kept these trigger-happy idiots waiting for too long.
There's no holding them back now.
.....
I'M ITCHIN' FOR SOME ACTION, BABY.


ARMD
I'M POSITIVE. IT WAS THE GUY IN THE PHOTO.
HE LEFT SHINGO ALL ALONE.
HERE'S THAT OPPORTUNITY YOU WERE LOOKING FOR.
IT'S NOW OR NEVER.
ALL RIGHT! WAIT THERE!
WE'RE ON OUR WAY!
AND, EVEN BETTER, IT'S RAINING HARDER.
IT'LL PROVIDE MORE COVER.
FREAKIN' A!


YOU'RE MUSASHI OF U.B.
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT BY MYSELF.
DO YOUR THING.
I KNOW IT'LL BE OKAY.
THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY HERE.
ZAAAAAAA
GO GET 'EM.
THEY'LL BE HERE IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES.
RIGHT ON!


LET'S CARVE THEM INTO OUR BOSOMS.
LET'S REMEMBER THEM FOREVER.
HEY! LOOK!
THERE IT IS!


ZAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
TIME KEEPS ON TICKING.
A MOMENT. THEN ANOTHER. AND ANOTHER.
IT WAS PROBABLY CHANCE WE MET.
AND WE'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO GO OUR OWN WAYS.
NO ONE CAN PREDICT WHAT WILL HAPPEN.
SO, LET'S MAKE EACH AND EVERY MOMENT COUNT.


IT'S HIM!
ARE YOU SURE?!
OF COURSE I AM! IT'S THE ONLY STUPID HOUSE AROUND HERE!
AND, THERE'S NO ONE AROUND. IT'S JUST LIKE WE SAID!
No. It's not going to be that easy.
STILL WORRIED, LAR?
FORGET ABOUT HIM! WE CAN TAKE CARE OF THIS OURSELVES!
IT'S GONNA BE A PIECE OF CAKE!
Where are they going to hit from?
WHERE'D JOHN GO AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
ULTIMATE BLUE IS NOTHING, BUT A BUNCH OF—

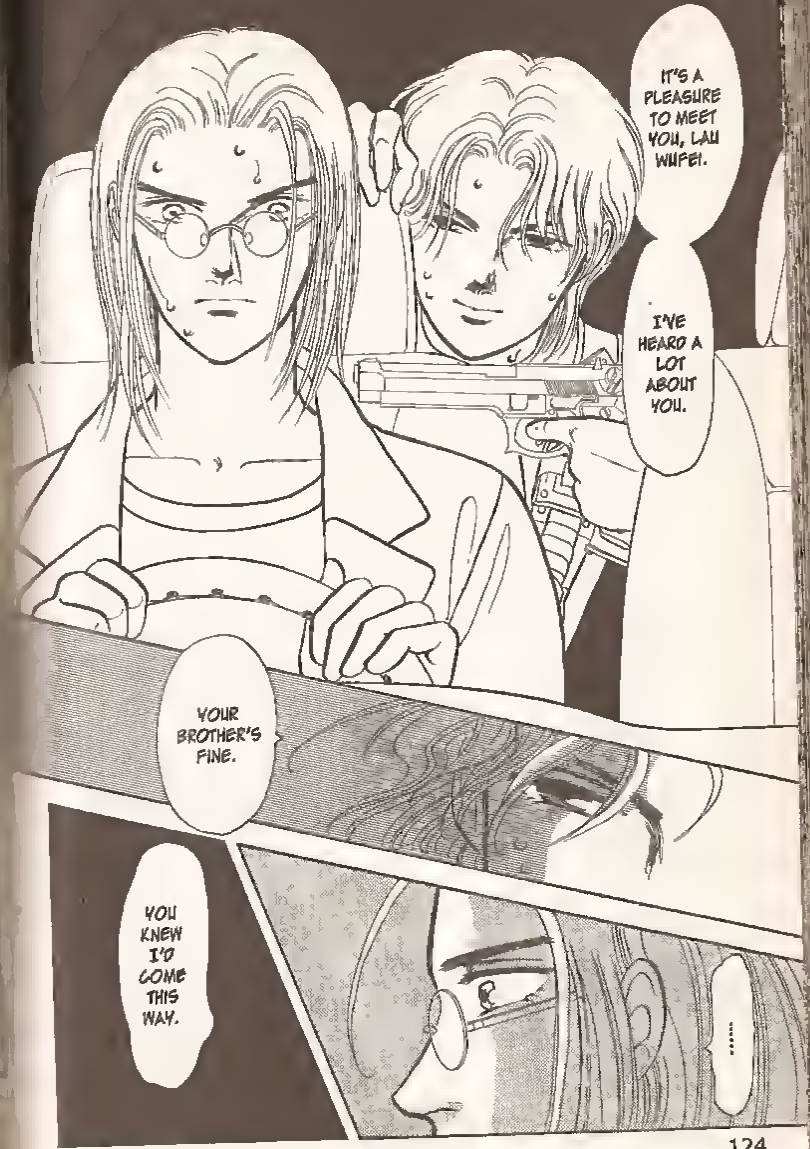

SCREEEEEEEEEECH
ARGH!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
AVOID?
HEY!
WHY IS THERE JUST ENOUGH SPACE FOR US TO AVOID THEM?
CHILL, BABY. I CAN AVOID THESE THINGS!
WHAT WAS JOHN LOOKING AT?!
THERE ARE BOMBS PLANTED EVERYWHERE!
NO WAY! I'M WASTIN' THAT CRUD!
IT'S HIM!
TURN THE CAR AROUND!
GET OUT OF HERE!
IT'S ULTIMATE BLUE!
KA-BOOM


WATCH OUT!
EEEEEEEECH
SMASH
URG...
OH, MAN...
AAA
AA
AA
AAA
LEARNED YOUR LESSON?
SO?
NOW YOU KNOW WHAT BOMBING VICTIMS GO THROUGH.
THE CHILDREN IN ULTIMATE BLUE ARE A HUNDRED TIMES BETTER.
PRETTY GOOD HIT MEN YOURSELVES? HARDLY.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE UNDERESTIMATED US.


Rooom
WAUGH!
ZG GG
ZG GGGG
HUH?
SCRaaaaEECH

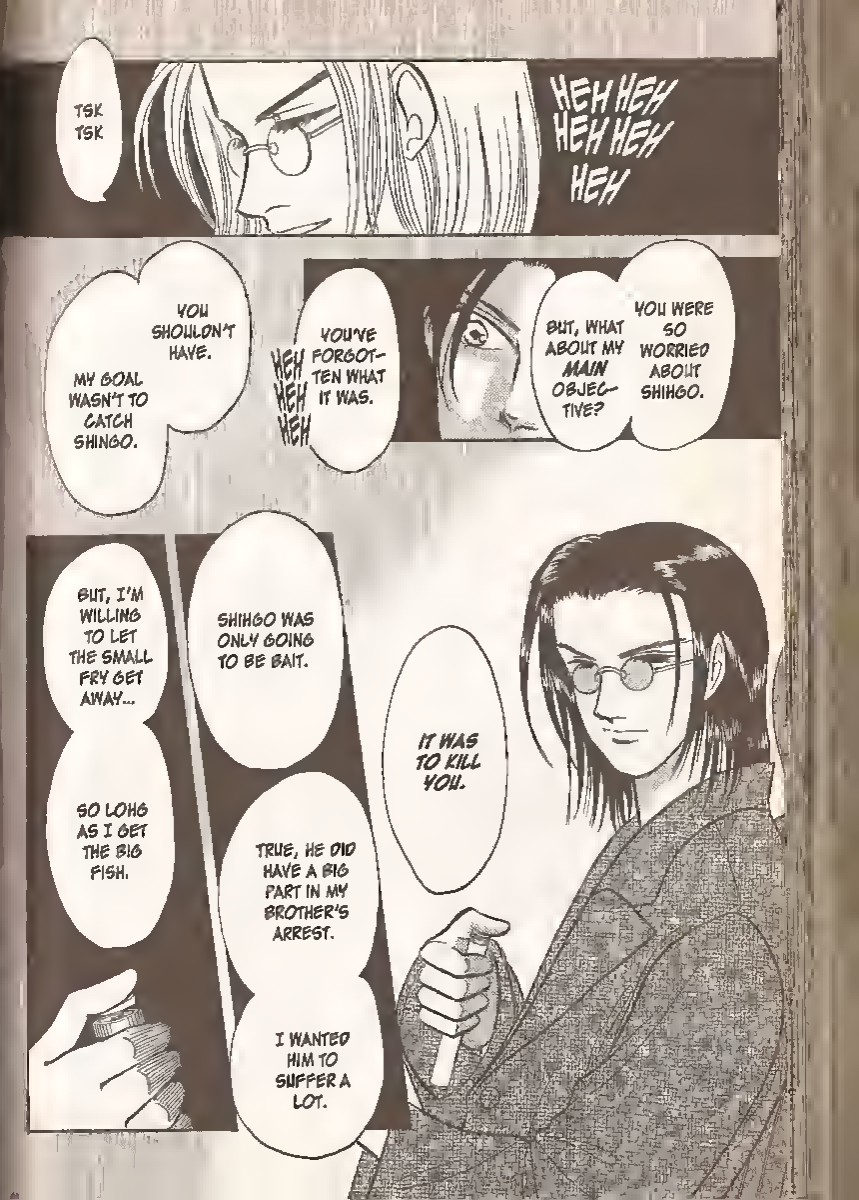

RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE


They'll be waiting if I go from the foot of the mountain. But, I'll still have a chance if I can take them from behind.
With any luck, I might be able to get to Tachibana.
Do I drive around to the other side and come down from above?
And I might be able to do it before he gets there.
Whose side is luck on?
I'LL DO IT!
DO WHAT?
HEY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SORRY. I NEEDED YOUR CAR.
He's probably taking care of those idiots about now.
Now what? It's make or break.
Do I keep going?
Or, do I turn back?
VROOM


IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, LAU WUFEI.
I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU.
YOUR BROTHER'S FINE.
YOU KNEW I'D COME THIS WAY.
.....

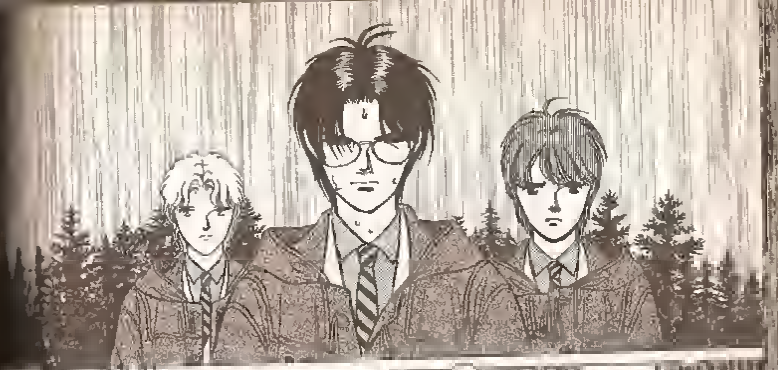

I ANTICIPATED YOUR EVERY MOVE.
YES.
I COULDN'T HAVE YOU GETTING CLOSE TO TACHIBANA.
OUR BOMB SQUAD ISN'T TOO BAD, IS IT?
SO?
WE PLANTED THE BOMBS SO YOU'D DRIVE INTO THAT GUARDRAIL-- BEFORE JOHN EVEN ARRIVED.
WE CAUGHT EVERY ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS.
I THINK IT'S TIME YOU GAVE UP, TOO.


I WAS PREPARED TO DIE FROM THE BEGINNING. OTHERWISE, I WOULDN'T HAVE TRIED SOMETHING THIS STUPID.
.....
ARE YOU GOING TO BLOW YOURSELF UP?
WITH YOU.
YOU KNOW WHAT?
TOO BAD YOU WERE A GIRL.
IT'S TOO BAD.

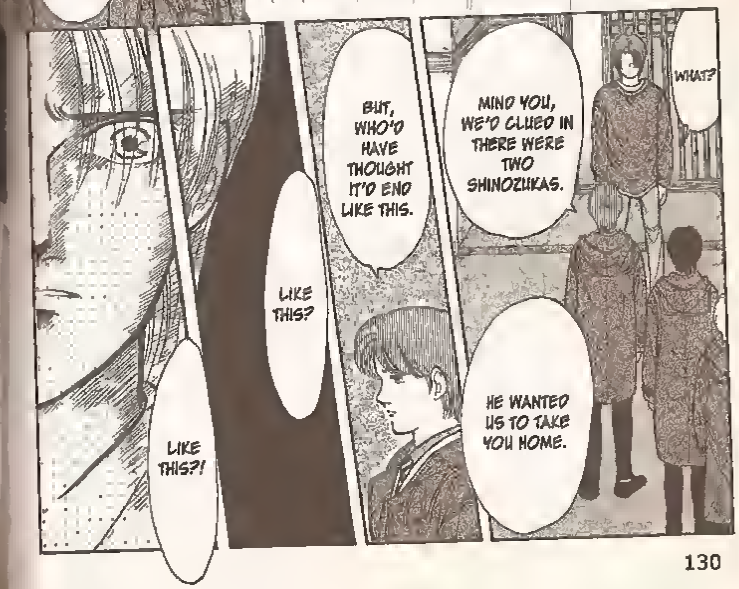

TSK TSK
HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE.
MY GOAL WASN'T TO CATCH SHINGO.
YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT IT WAS.
HEH HEH HEH
BUT, WHAT ABOUT MY MAIN OBJECTIVE?
YOU WERE SO WORRIED ABOUT SHINGO.
IT WAS TO KILL YOU.
SHINGO WAS ONLY GOING TO BE BAIT.
TRUE, HE DID HAVE A BIG PART IN MY BROTHER'S ARREST.
I WANTED HIM TO SUFFER A LOT.
BUT, I'M WILLING TO LET THE SMALL FRY GET AWAY...
SO LONG AS I GET THE BIG FISH.


AAAA
AAAA
AAAA
AAAA
AAAA
AAAA
SPLISH
.....
ONE-NINER?


WHAT?
WHAT HAP-PENED?
NO WAY...
WHERE IS SHE?
ONE-NINE?

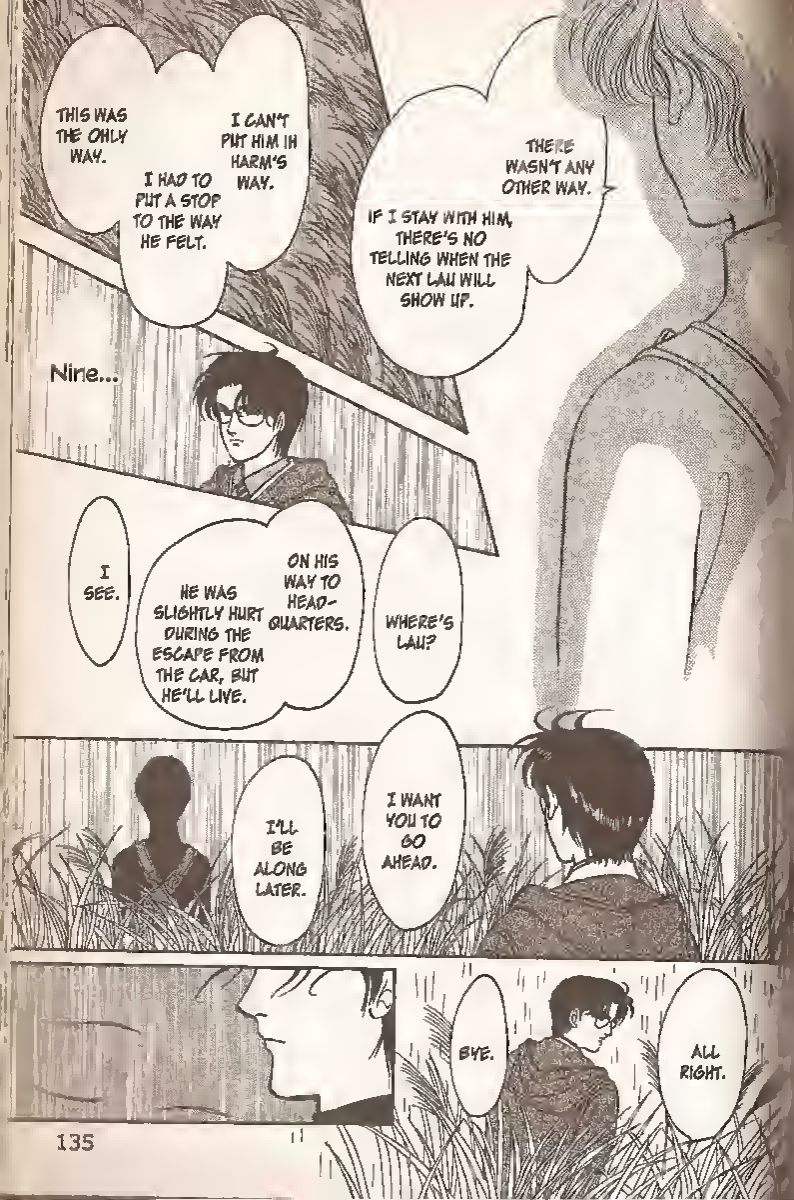



HE TOLD US EVERY-THING.
..... WHY, HERE?
ANO, YOU TWO.


LIKE THIS?!
LIKE THIS?
BUT, WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT IT'D END LIKE THIS.
MIND YOU, WE'D CLUED IN THERE WERE TWO SHINOZUKAS.
WHAT?
HE WANTED US TO TAKE YOU HOME.

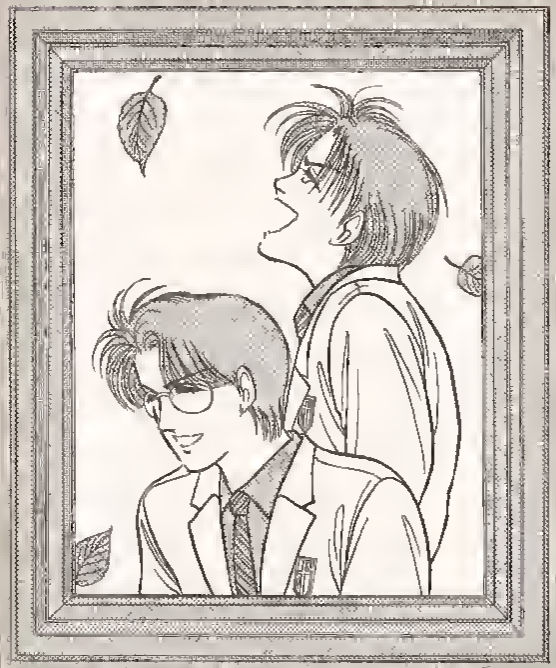

"UNTIL WE DIE," SHE SAID.
"LET'S LOOK FOR A WAY TO BE TOGETHER."
SHE SAID, "LET'S LOOK."
BUT ALREADY?
I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT.
I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT!
SHINOU KAAAAA!


THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT OF THE CAR.
WE PASSED IT ON THE WAY UP.
IT'S TRUE.
NUMBER NINE OF U.B.!
NO WAY!
BUT, THAT'S MUSASHI!
SHINGO!
IT'S BAD ENOUGH WE SAW KOU THAT WAY.
YOU SHOULDN'T.
HE'S RIGHT.
DON'T GO!
I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE IT!
LET GO!
STOP!


THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY.
I CAN'T PUT HIM IN HARM'S WAY.
I HAD TO PUT A STOP TO THE WAY HE FELT.
THERE WASN'T ANY OTHER WAY.
IF I STAY WITH HIM, THERE'S NO TELLING WHEN THE NEXT LAU WILL SHOW UP.
Nine...
I SEE.
HE WAS SLIGHTLY HURT DURING THE ESCAPE FROM THE CAR, BUT HE'LL LIVE.
ON HIS WAY TO HEAD-QUARTERS.
WHERE'S LAU?
I'LL BE ALONG LATER.
I WANT YOU TO GO AHEAD.
BYE.
ALL RIGHT.


29 IS TAKING CARE OF THE HOUSE NOW.
SHINGO'S FRIENDS TOOK HIM HOME.
EVERYTHING WENT ACCORDING TO PLAN.
USING LAU'S INTENT TO BLOW HIMSELF UP WAS BRILLIANT.
SHINGO'S FRIENDS BELIEVED THE FAKE BODIES TO BE REAL.
BUT, IS THIS REALLY THE WAY YOU WANTED IT TO BE?
NINE?

OUR FIRST LOVE...



...FOREVER IN OUR MEMORIES.

I love you, Shinozuka.

I love you.

AND THROUGH IT ALL...

...TIME KEEPS ON TICKING.

IT SWEEPS AWAY THE INEVITABLE PAIN.

IT HEALS THE HURT.

THE DARKNESS WILL EVENTUALLY GIVE WAY TO THE LIGHT...

...IN TIME.

YOU DO IT, MAN!

GOOD LUCK, DUDE!

ERIC, YOU GO SHOW 'EM!

Mission 13: Under the Star Spangled Banner

I'M GONNA OPEN UP SHOP IN L.A. I PROMISE I'LL PAY YOU BACK DOUBLE.

...I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK Y'ALL ENOUGH. I MEAN, YOU'RE ALL HELPING ME SEE MY DREAM COME TRUE.

REAL-LY...

STOP BEIN' SUCH DOWNERS.

SO LONG, DUDES. I PROMISE IT'LL BE GOOD NEWS WHEN YOU HEAR FROM ME.

VROOOM

NAH. DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT IT.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE O' US WHO'S ACTUALLY ATTEMPTING TO GET OUTTA THIS HOLE.

WE'RE ALL JUST HAPPY TO SEE YOU TRY.



I'm gonna open up shop in L.A.

And I'm gonna make it the best darned store in the whole of the U.S. of A!

I remember that's what was goin' through my head at the time.

I packed up and left home.

It's the American dream and all, you know?

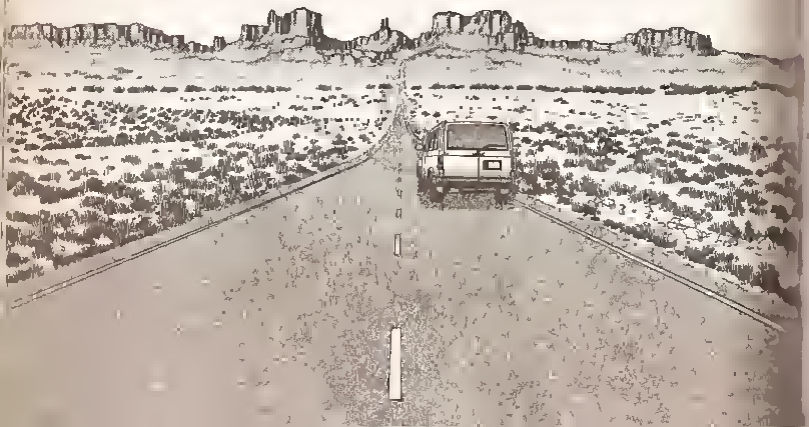
But I didn't know that much.

And I didn't have much experience, either.

I figured there'd be some confusion at first.

But, nothing had prepared me for what was about to go down.

Nothing.



PROBABLY NOT.

I WONDER IF HE'S GONNA BE OKAY?

(SIGH) WELL, DUDES, HE'S OFF.

LET'S LEAVE IT AT THAT.

STILL, HE HAD A DREAM-- AND, WE'RE HELPIN' HIM.

SO WE LENT HIM A BIT OF CASH. CITY LIFE AIN'T SO EASY US COUNTRY BOYS CAN STRIKE IT RICH RIGHT AWAY.



But, that's all the more reason I want to succeed.

Besides, I borrowed the little cash they had, so I owe it to them, too.

I know.

It's a reckless dream.

TAKE CARE, ERIC!

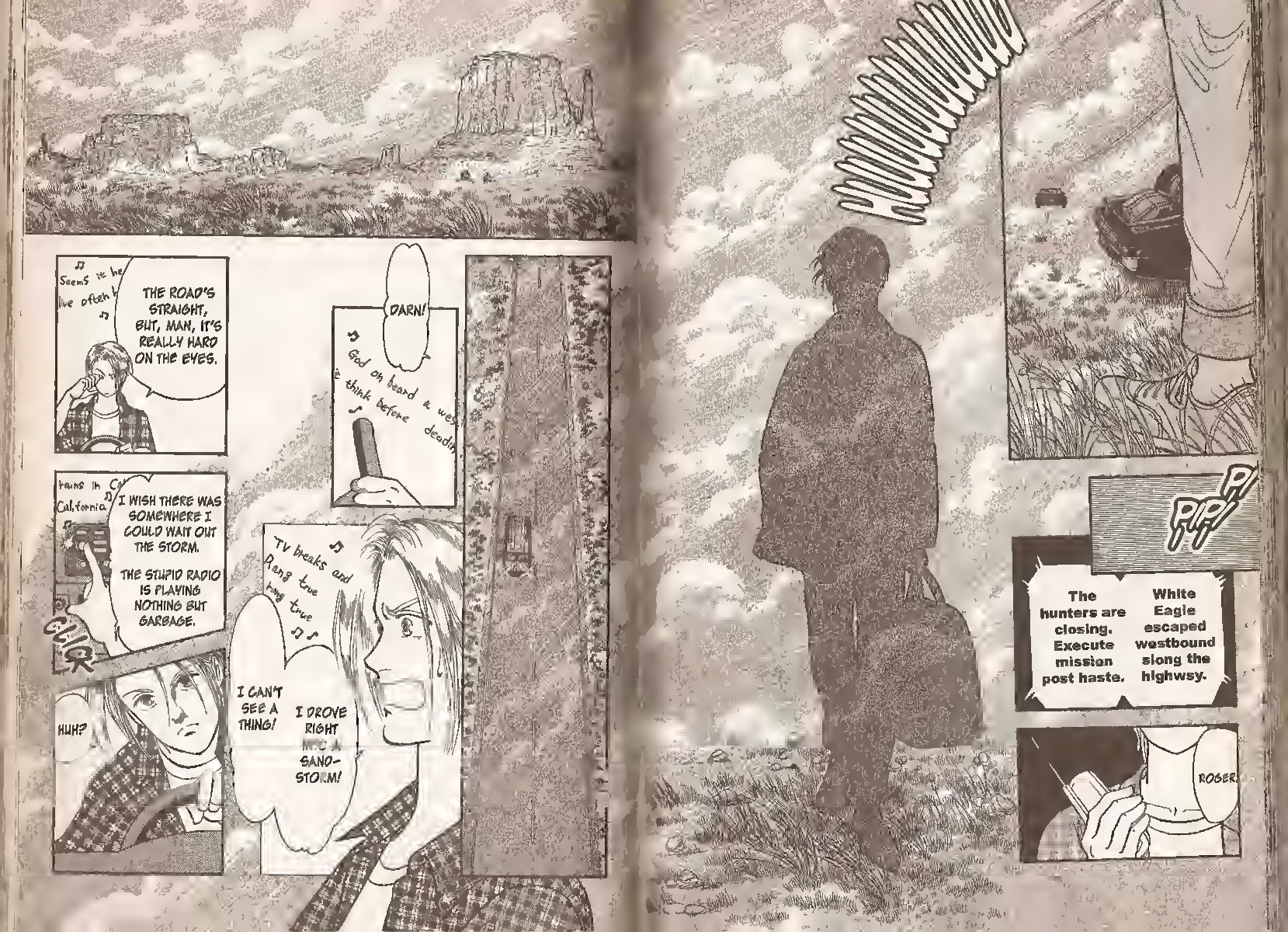
YOU'RE TOO NICE A GUY. THAT MAKES YOU A SITTIN' DUCK FOR CITY SLICKERS, SO YOU WATCH OUT, ALL RIGHT?

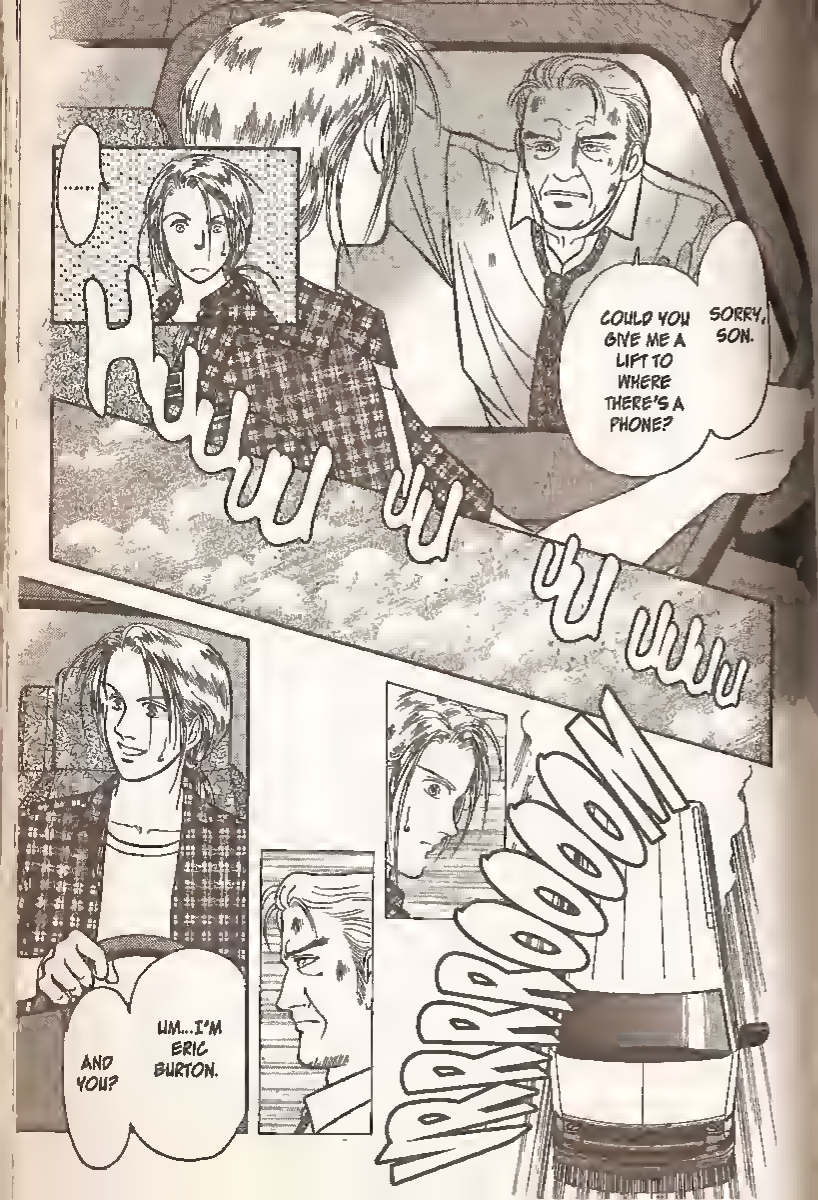
DON'T WORRY! IF THINGS DON'T WORK OUT, YOU COME ON BACK!

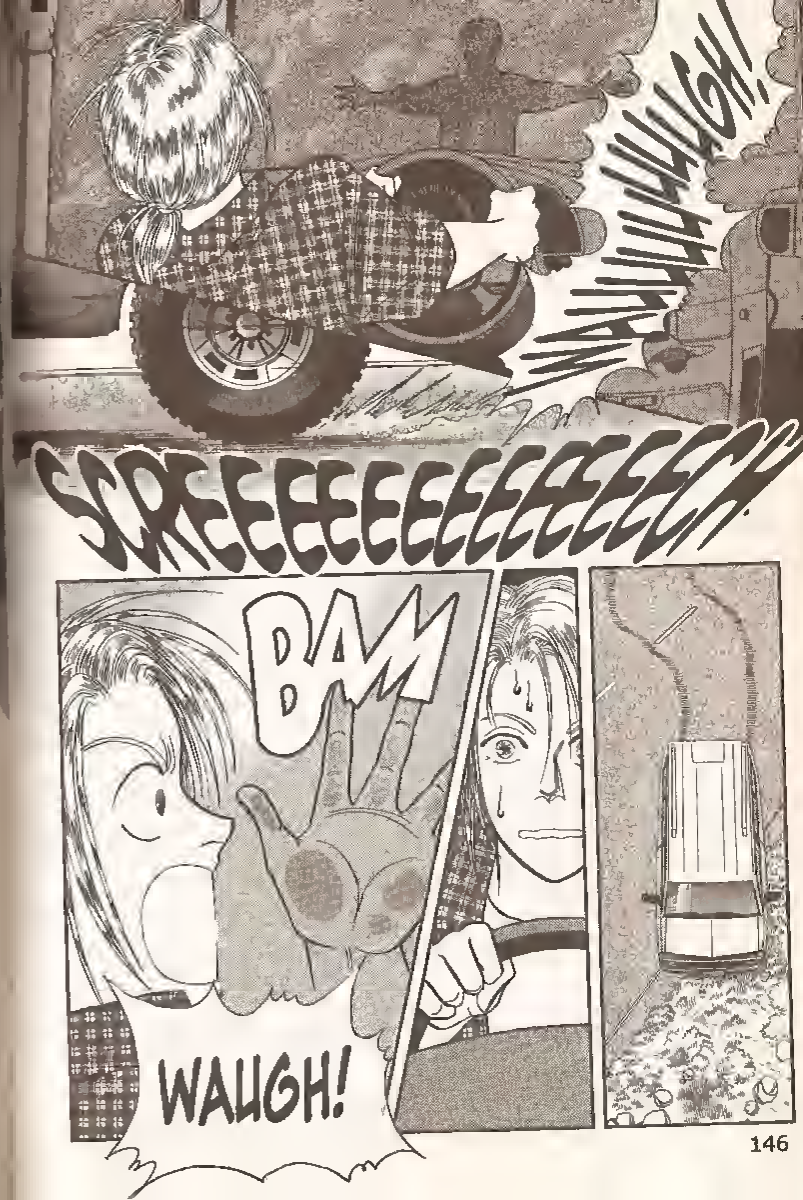


9番目のムサシ

Mission 13: Under the Star Spangled Banner


♫ Seems it he live often ♫
THE ROAD'S STRAIGHT, BUT, MAN, IT'S REALLY HARD ON THE EYES.
DARN!
♫ God on heard a wet think before deadlin ♪
trains in Ca California
I WISH THERE WAS SOMEWHERE I COULD WAIT OUT THE STORM.
THE STUPID RADIO IS PLAYING NOTHING BUT GARBAGE.
CLICK
♫ TV breaks and Rang true long true ♫♪
HUH?
I CAN'T SEE A THING!
I DROVE RIGHT INTO A SAND-STORM!
PIP! PIP!
The hunters are closing. Execute mission post haste.
White Eagle escaped westbound along the highwsy.
ROGER.

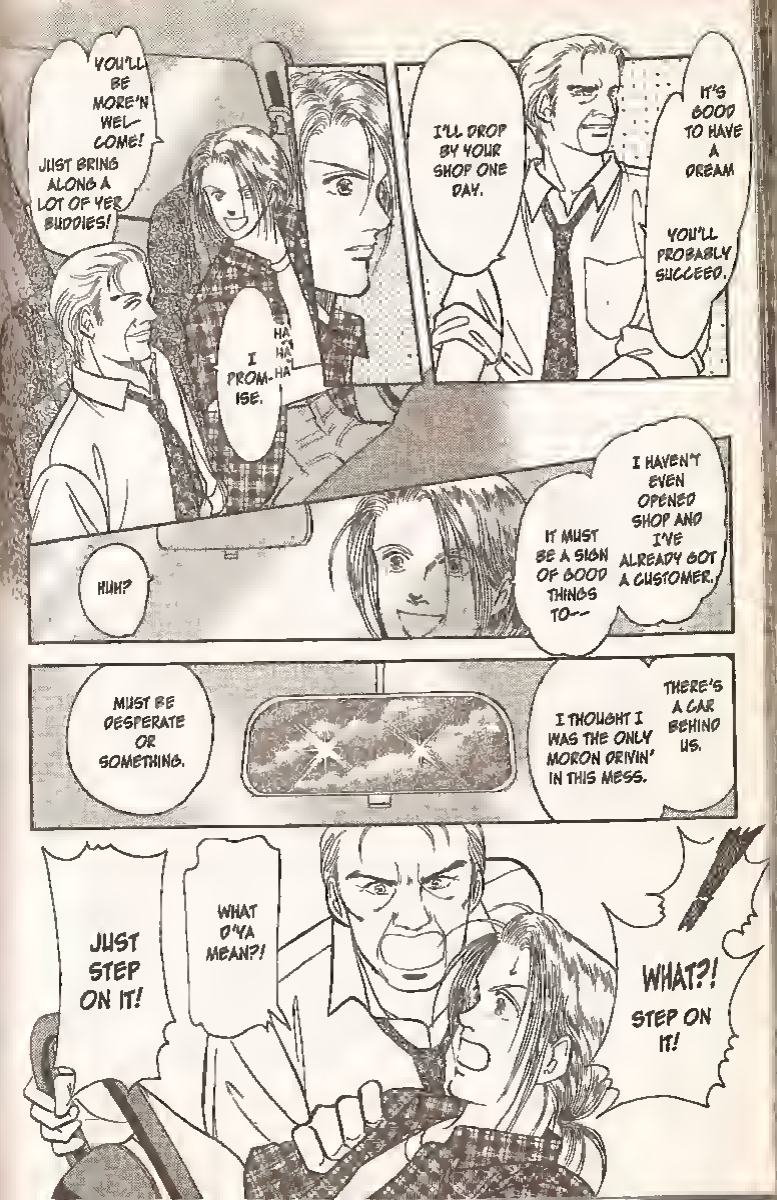

.....
COULD YOU GIVE ME A LIFT TO WHERE THERE'S A PHONE?
SORRY, SON.
VRRRROOOM
AND YOU?
UM...I'M ERIC BURTON.


SCREEEE


So, what was he doin' standin' 'round in the middle of a sandstorm?
Admittedly, he doesn't look dangerous.
Something's not right.
HUMPH
White collar, by the looks of it.
BOB? WHERE'RE YA HEADIN' TO?
LOS ANGELES. IT'S FAIRLY IMPORTANT.
L.A.? ME, TOO!
THAT'S PRETTY FAR.
LOOK WHO'S TALKING! I'M GONNA START UP A COFFEE SHOP. IT'S NOTHING REALLY, BUT YOU GOTTA START SOMEWHERE.
IT'S MY DREAM!
IT MIGHT BE A TOUGH GO OF IT AT MY AGE, BUT WHAT THE HEY.
I'M GONNA MAKE IT BIG, YES SIRREE!
MY BUDDIES WERE GOOD ENOUGH TO LOAN ME A BIT OF CASH.
YOU BET!
SO, YOU'RE PURSUING YOUR DREAM?

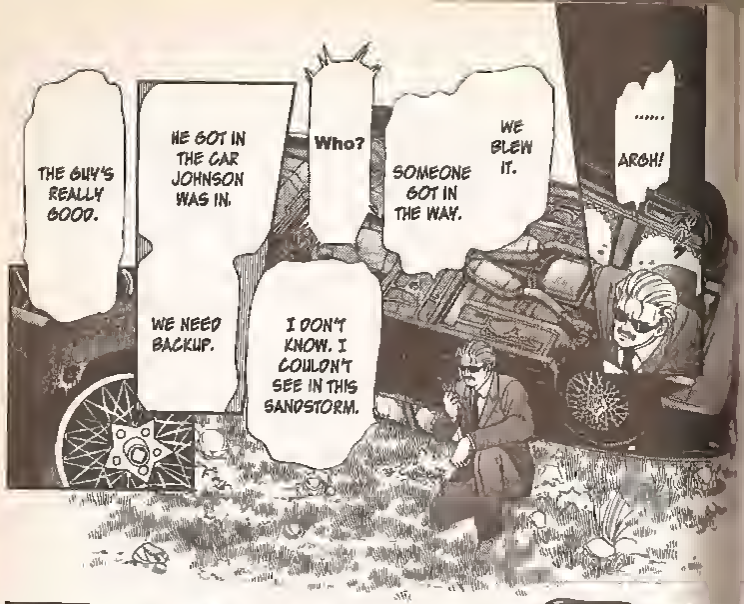

ALL RIGHT, BOB.
BOB'S FINE.
MR. JOHNSON?
I'M ROBERT JOHNSON.
OH, SORRY. I FORGOT.
YER CAR BREAK DOWN? I DON'T REMEMBER SEEIN' ONE...
LIKE, IN THE MIDDLE OF A SANDSTORM?
WHAT WERE YOU DOIN' OUT THERE?
I'LL TELL YOU RIGHT NOW. I DON'T HAVE ANY CASH ON ME. IF ANYTHING, I'M IN DEBT.
HA HA
RELAX. I'M NOT GOING TO ROB YOU.
SORRY.
I CAN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING MORE FOR NOW.
.....


BISH
BISHBISHBISH
BISH
WAAAAAAUGH!
WH-WHAT IN TARNATION IS GOIN' ON?!


YOU'LL BE MORE'N WEL-COME! JUST BRING ALONG A LOT OF YER BUDDIES!
I'LL DROP BY YOUR SHOP ONE DAY.
IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A DREAM
YOU'LL PROBABLY SUCCEED.
I PROM-ISE.
HA HA HA
HUH?
IT MUST BE A SIGN OF GOOD THINGS TO--
I HAVEN'T EVEN OPENED SHOP AND I'VE ALREADY GOT A CUSTOMER.
MUST BE DESPERATE OR SOMETHING.
I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY MORON DRIVIN' IN THIS MESS.
THERE'S A CAR BEHIND US.
JUST STEP ON IT!
WHAT O'YA MEAN?!
WHAT?!
STEP ON IT!

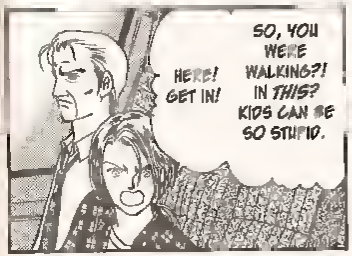

GRAAAAR
SH
I DON'T KNOW.
SQUEAK-SQUEAK
WHA--
WHAT JUST HAPPENED, BOB?
I GOT CAUGHT IN THIS SAND-STORM.
COULD YOU GIVE ME A LIFT TO THE NEXT TOWN?
WHY ME?
KNOCK KNOCK!
WAUGH!


I CAN'T!
THIS IS THE FASTEST THIS OLE WRECK'LL DO!
GO FASTER!
SCREEEEEEECH
BISH
WE'RE DEAD!
PAH


THE GUY'S REALLY GOOD.
HE GOT IN THE CAR JOHNSON WAS IN.
WE NEED BACKUP.
Who?
I DON'T KNOW. I COULDN'T SEE IN THIS SANDSTORM.
SOMEONE GOT IN THE WAY.
WE BLEW IT.
.....
ARGH!

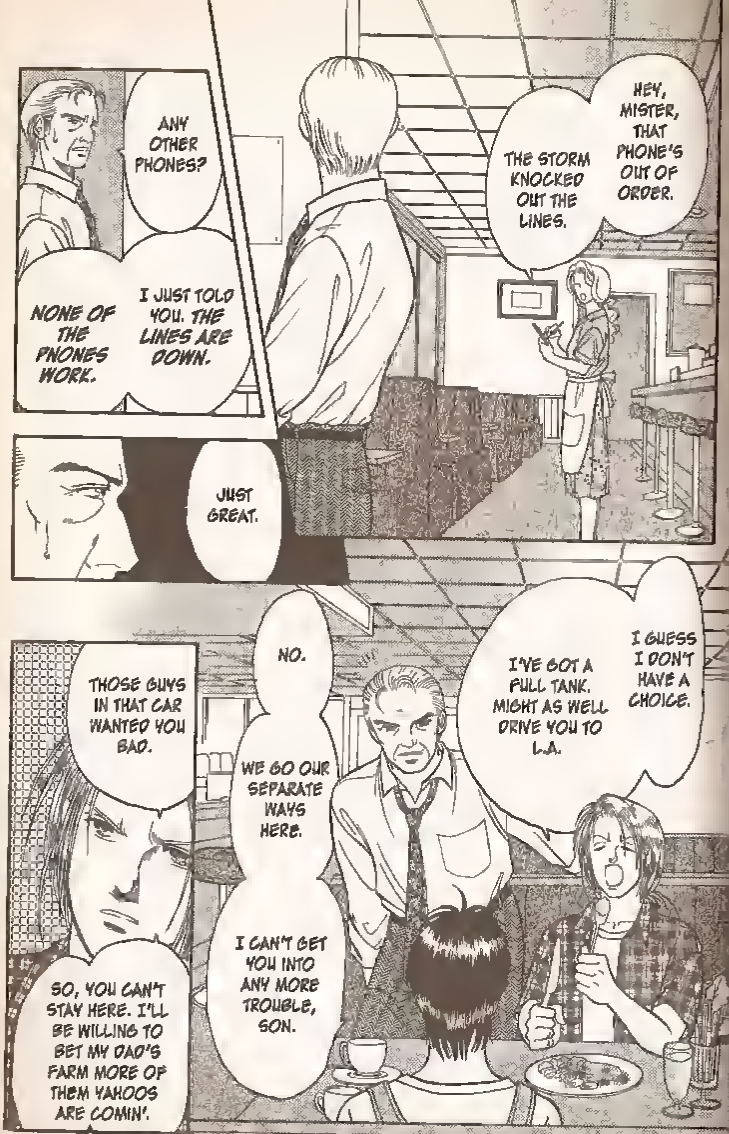

WHAT'S YER NAME, KID?
The kid hasn't said a word.
I keep pickin' up basket cases.
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
JAPAN.
.....
KOU.

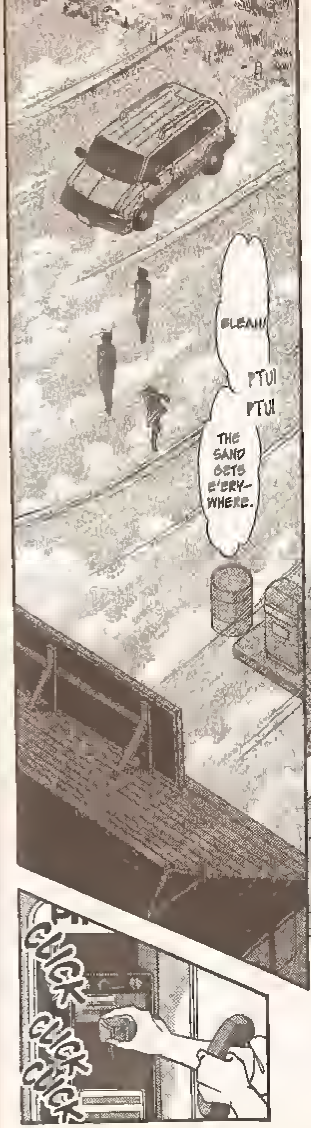

I RAN SHORT OF FUNDS, THOUGH.
YOU ALONE?
YES. I'M TRAVELLING ACROSS THE COUNTRY.


HERE! GET IN!
SO, YOU WERE WALKING?! IN THIS? KIDS CAN BE SO STUPID.

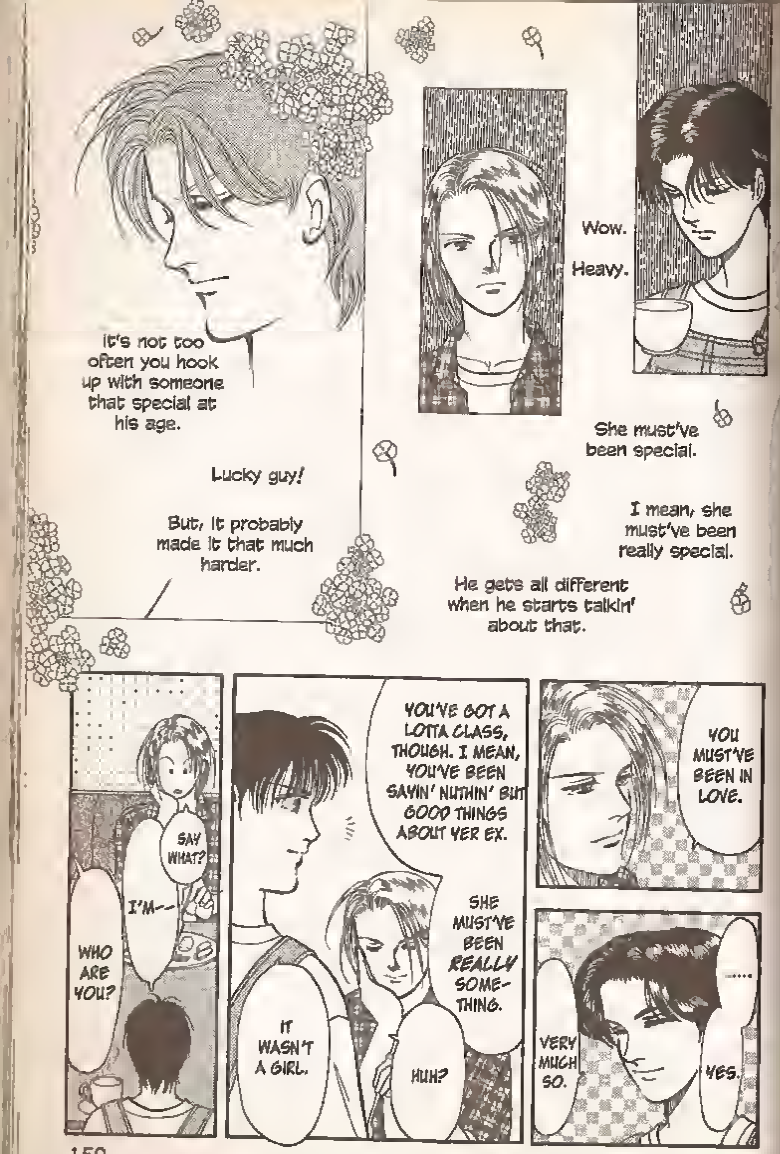

THANKS.

It's just a kid.
VROOOM


HEY, MISTER, THAT PHONE'S OUT OF ORDER.
THE STORM KNOCKED OUT THE LINES.
ANY OTHER PHONES?
I JUST TOLD YOU. THE LINES ARE DOWN.
NONE OF THE PHONES WORK.
JUST GREAT.
I GUESS I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.
I'VE GOT A FULL TANK. MIGHT AS WELL DRIVE YOU TO L.A.
NO.
WE GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS HERE.
I CAN'T GET YOU INTO ANY MORE TROUBLE, SON.
THOSE GUYS IN THAT CAR WANTED YOU BAD.
SO, YOU CAN'T STAY HERE. I'LL BE WILLING TO BET MY DAD'S FARM MORE OF THEM YAHOOS ARE COMIN'.


BLEAH
PTUI
PTUI
THE SAND GETS E'ERY-WHERE.
CLICK CLICK CLICK


.....
TRAVEL-LING BY YOURSELF AT YOUR AGE?
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF COURAGE, YOUNG MAN.
MAYBE YOU JUST BROKE UP WITH A GAL.
AND YOU'RE ON THE ROAD, TRYING TO FORGET.
THAT'S PARTLY TRUE
I HAD TO BREAK UP WITH SOMEONE I CARED ABOUT.
WELL...UM... THAT HAPPENS TO E'RYONE.
Oops. Scored a bull's eye.
RIGHT?
M-MUSE and ROADSIDE
GAS & OIL
DRINKS EAT
THERE!
WE CAN GET SOMETHIN' TO EAT.

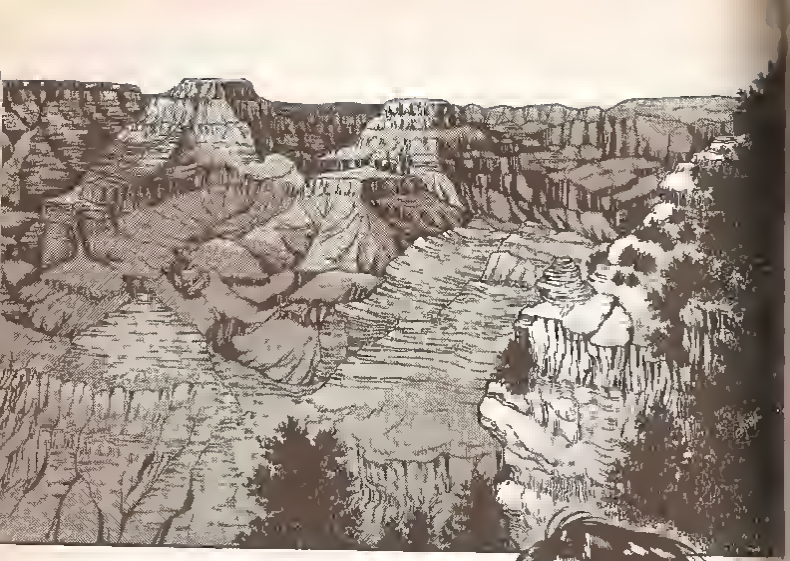

It's not too often you hook up with someone that special at his age.
Lucky guy!
But, it probably made it that much harder.
Wow.
Heavy.
She must've been special.
I mean, she must've been really special.
He gets all different when he starts talkin' about that.
WHO ARE YOU?
SAY WHAT?
I'M--
IT WASN'T A GIRL.
YOU'VE GOT A LOTTA CLASS, THOUGH. I MEAN, YOU'VE BEEN SAYIN' NUTHIN' BUT GOOD THINGS ABOUT YER EX.
HUH?
SHE MUST'VE BEEN REALLY SOMETHING.
YOU MUST'VE BEEN IN LOVE.
VERY MUCH SO.
.....
YES.

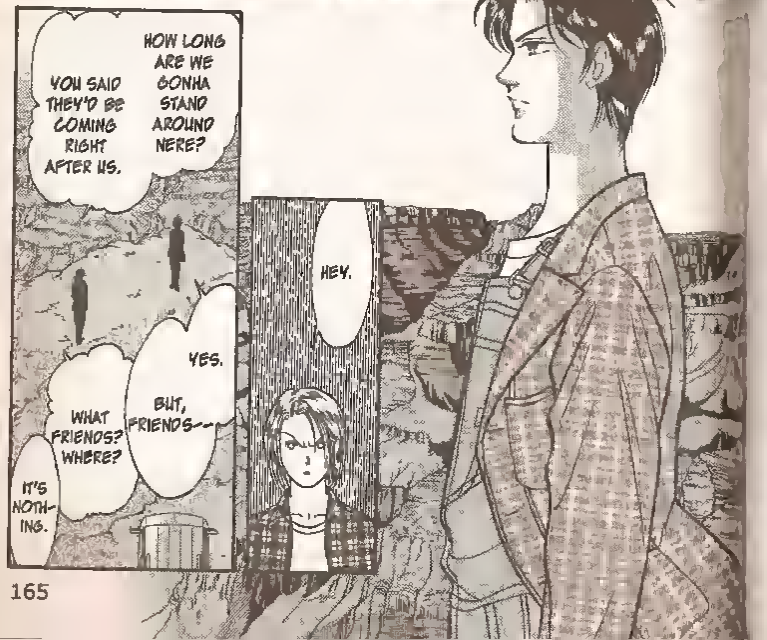

I did it again.
Why do I always have to watch out fer others?
I've gotta do somethin' about this.
ERIC...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SORT OF TROUBLE YOU'RE IN. BUT I CAN'T FEED YOU TO THE WOLVES.
END OF STORY.
BUT--
BESIDES, YOU'RE MY FIRST CUSTOMER.
YOU'RE A NICE PERSON.
That's why I'm such a--
THE PERSON I BROKE UP WITH WAS LIKE YOU.
THAT'S VERY GENEROUS AND JUST OF YOU.
I'M JUST THE STUPID SAMARITAN, THANK YOU.
MY FRIENDS WERE ALWAYS MEAN ABOUT THAT.

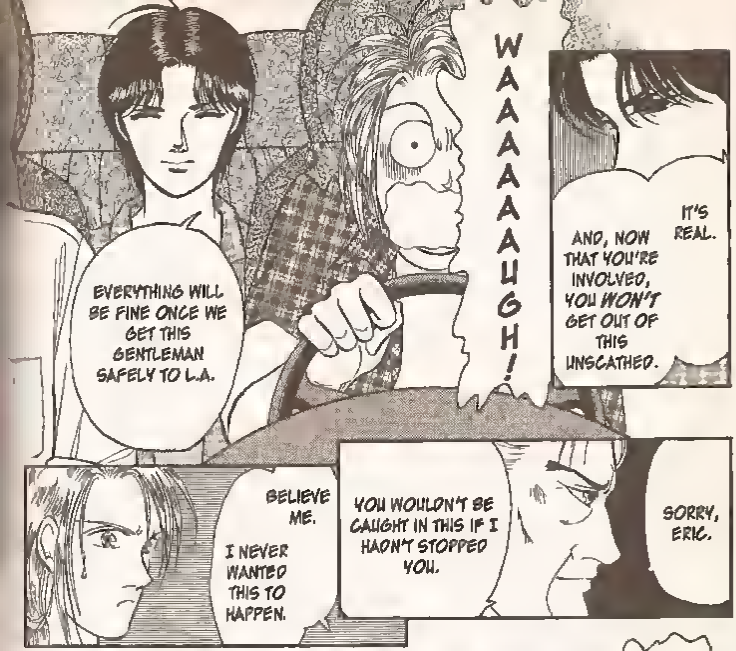

I'M NOT A "GUY."
PSHUU
PSHUU PSHUU
KLUNK
HUH?
WAAAAAUGH!

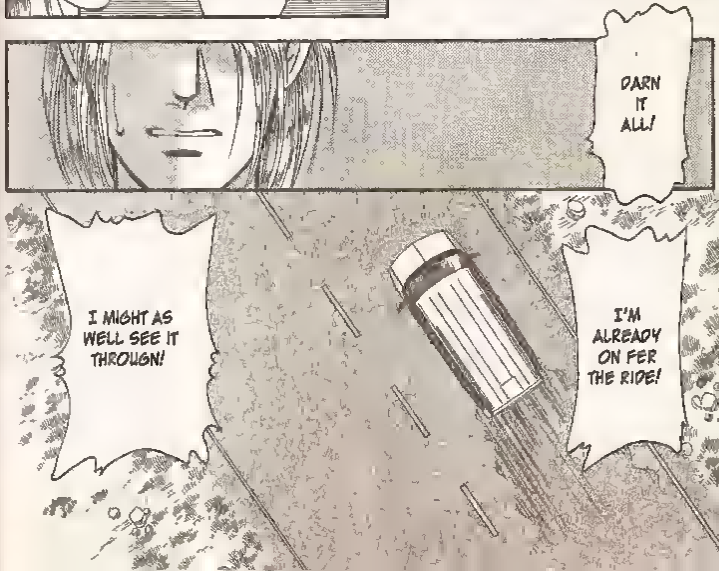

YOU WERE THERE WHEN WE WERE SHOT AT.
YOU DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING OF A CAR ON ITS ROOF.
SOMETHING HAPPENED TO THAT CAR.
AND YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE THERE
SO?
JUST WHO ARE YOU?
HEY, COME ON!
COME ON, BOB.
TAKE A LOOK AT HIM.
HE'S JUST A KID.
BUT...
LISTEN TO YER-SELF!
HE'S JUST A JAPANESE GUY TRYIN' TO GET OVER A GIRL.
RIGHT, KOU?
SORT OF. JAPANESE, YES.
BUT...


THE ENEMY IS COMING.
WE HAVE TO WATCH OUT.
IT'S MY MISSION TO SEE YOU SAFELY THROUGH TO L.A.
RELAX. AT THE VERY LEAST, I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY.
JUST WHO ARE YOU?
HOW DOES AN HONEST COUNTRY BOY GET CAUGHT UP IN THIS?
WHAT THE NECK'S GOING ON?! TELL ME IT'S A DREAM!
WHAT D'YA MEAN "MISSION?"
WAIT A SECOND!
AH... AH... YEAH.
WE'RE LEAVING NOW!
SORRY. FRIENDS WILL BE ALONG TO TAKE CARE OF THIS
ERIC! DON'T FORGET YOUR KEYS!
AIIIEEEEEEEE!

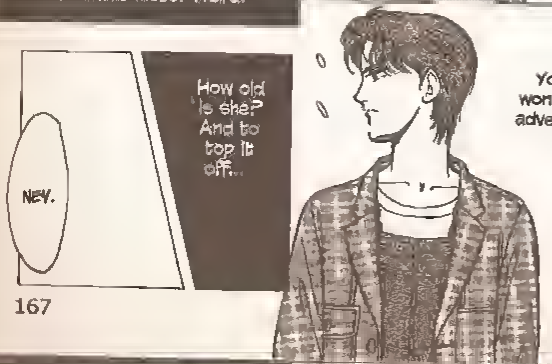


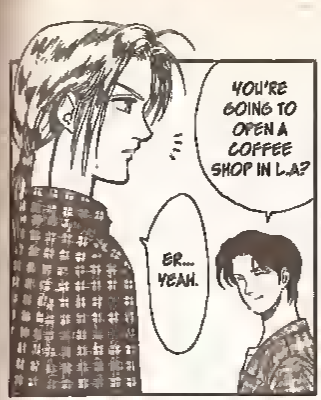

HOW LONG ARE WE GONNA STAND AROUND HERE?
YOU SAID THEY'D BE COMING RIGHT AFTER US.
HEY.
YES.
BUT, FRIENDS--
WHAT FRIENDS? WHERE?
IT'S NOTHING.

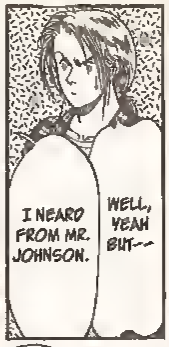

WAAAAAAAUGH!
IT'S REAL.
AND, NOW THAT YOU'RE INVOLVED, YOU WON'T GET OUT OF THIS UNSCATHED.
EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE ONCE WE GET THIS GENTLEMAN SAFELY TO L.A.
BELIEVE ME.
I NEVER WANTED THIS TO HAPPEN.
YOU WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT IN THIS IF I HADN'T STOPPED YOU.
SORRY, ERIC.

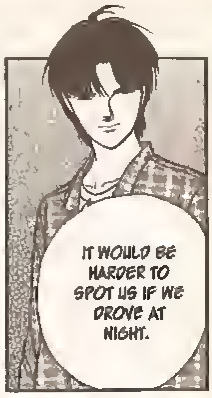

DARN IT ALL!
I MIGHT AS WELL SEE IT THROUGH!
I'M ALREADY ON FOR THE RIDE!

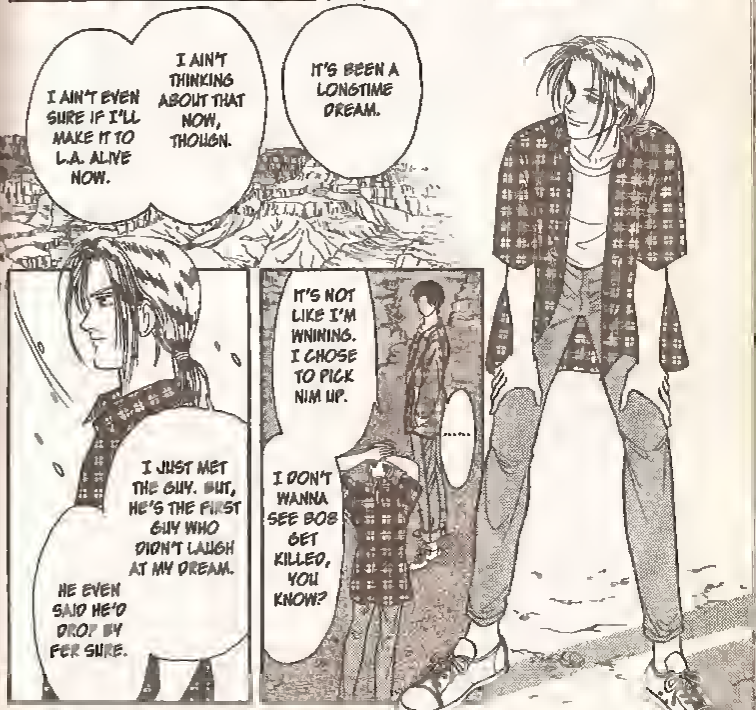

DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR LIFE OR YOUR DREAM.
I PROMISE TO PROTECT THEM.
BUT I CAN'T DO ANYTHIN' ABOUT THAT. IT'S THE WAY I AM.
ANYWAY, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOLD I'M TOO TRUSTING.
YOU WILL OPEN YOUR STORE.
I KNOW IT.
AND IT'LL WORK OUT.
.....
But you know, coming from her, I can believe it.
Even in this mess. Weird.

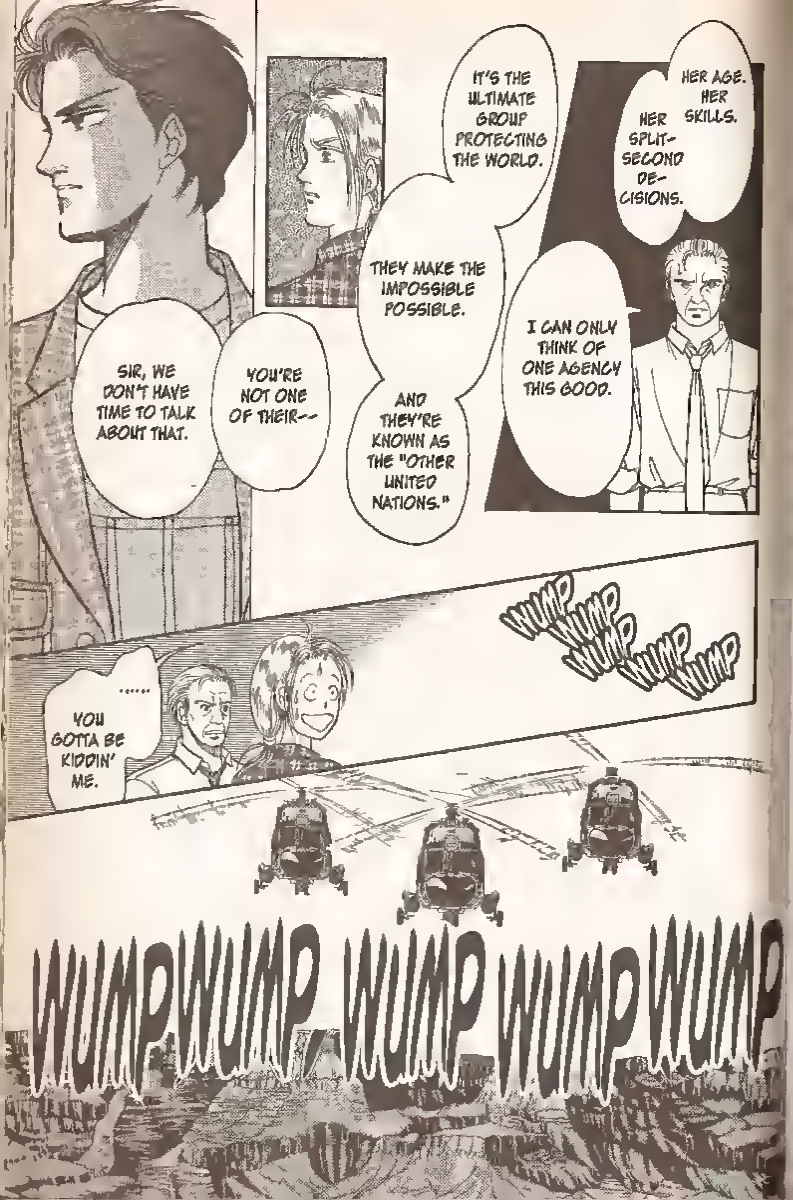

NEV.
How old is she? And to top it off...
You gotta start wonderin' about the adversity she's gone through.


YOU'RE GOING TO OPEN A COFFEE SHOP IN L.A?
ER... YEAH.

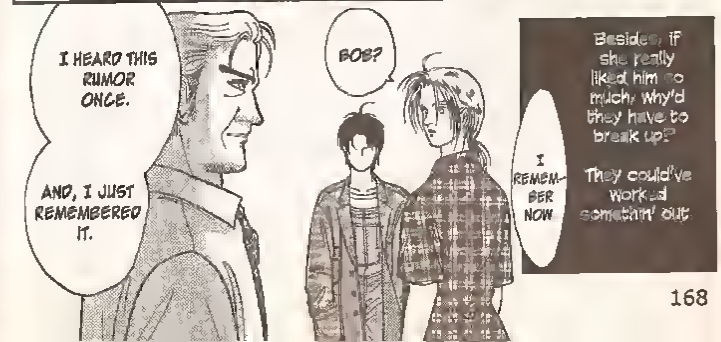

I HEARD FROM MR. JOHNSON.
WELL, YEAH BUT---


IT WOULD BE HARDER TO SPOT US IF WE DROVE AT NIGHT.


I AIN'T EVEN SURE IF I'LL MAKE IT TO L.A. ALIVE NOW.
I AIN'T THINKING ABOUT THAT NOW, THOUGH.
IT'S BEEN A LONGTIME DREAM.
I JUST MET THE GUY. BUT, HE'S THE FIRST GUY WHO DIDN'T LAUGH AT MY DREAM.
HE EVEN SAID HE'D DROP BY FER SURE.
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M WHINING. I CHOSE TO PICK NIM UP.
I DON'T WANNA SEE BOB GET KILLED, YOU KNOW?
.....


SIR, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO TALK ABOUT THAT.
YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THEIR--
IT'S THE ULTIMATE GROUP PROTECTING THE WORLD.
THEY MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE.
AND THEY'RE KNOWN AS THE "OTHER UNITED NATIONS."
I CAN ONLY THINK OF ONE AGENCY THIS GOOD.
HER AGE. HER SKILLS.
HER SPLIT-SECOND DE-CISIONS.
WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP
.....
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN' ME.
WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP

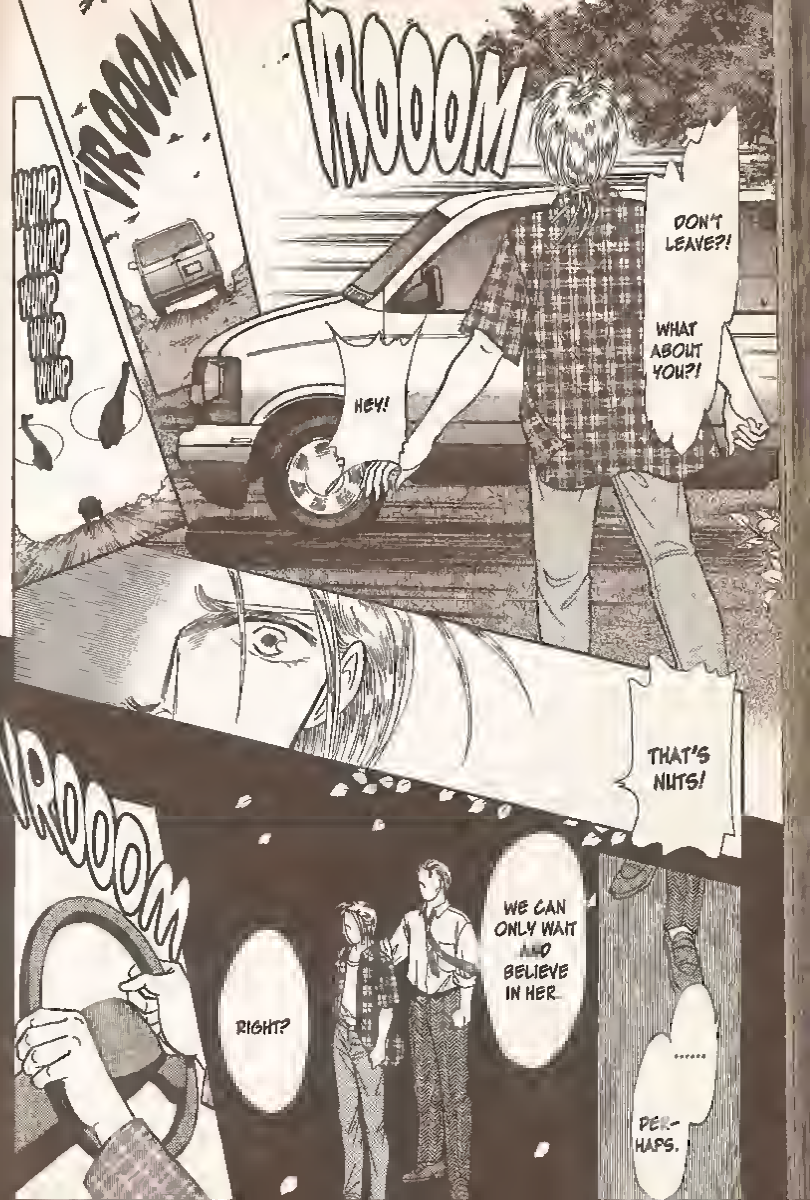

HE HAD A DREAM LIKE YOU.
OH. THAT.
HE DREAMT OF BEING IN THE REAL WORLD.
I WANTED TO MAKE IT COME TRUE.
SHE'S A GIRL.
WHY'D YOU BREAK UP?
YOU KNOW? WITH THE GUY YOU LIKED?
What did she mean by that?
.....


I HEARD THIS RUMOR ONCE.
AND, I JUST REMEMBERED IT.
BOB?
I REMEM-BER NOW
Besides, if she really liked him so much, why'd they have to break up?
They could've worked somethin' out.


THERE ARE TREES AROUND THE NEXT CORNER. STOP THE CAR THERE!
THEY'LL SPOT US RIGHT AWAY!
JUST DO IT!
VROOOOM
DON'T LEAVE UNTIL THEN!
GET OUT AND HIDE HERE UNTIL IT'S OVER. MY TEAM WILL BE HERE SHORTLY.
WUMP WUMP WUMP
WUMP WUMP WUMP

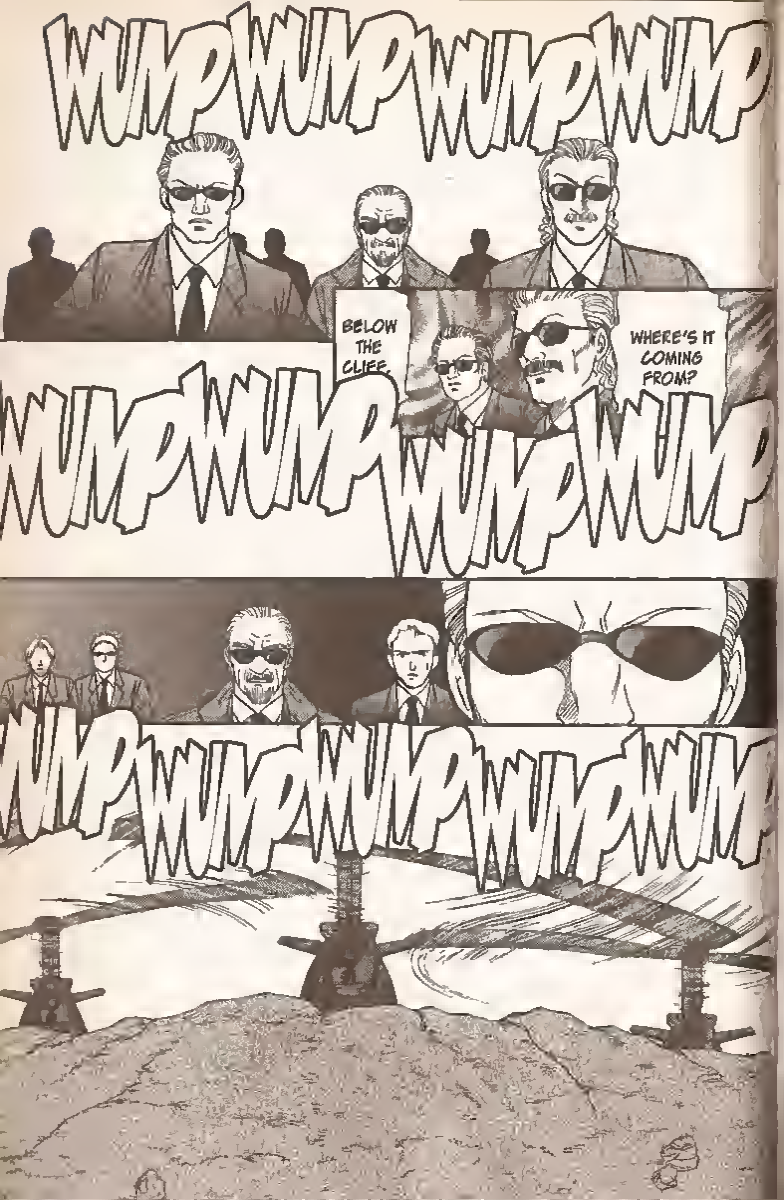

WAUGH!
WUMP WUMP WUMP
WUMP WUMP WUMP
RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO NOW? THEY'RE IN CHOPPERS!
THEY'LL TURN US INTO SWISS CHEESE!
WAUGH!

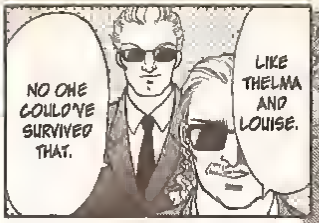

SQUEE
RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
ARGH! THEY KEEP JINKING AROUND.
NOT FOR MUCH LONGER.
THERE'S A CLIFF AHEAD.
EITHER WAY, THEY'RE DEAD.
WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP


VROOOM
VROOM
WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP
HEY!
DON'T LEAVE?!
WHAT ABOUT YOU?!
THAT'S NUTS!
VROOOM
RIGHT?
WE CAN ONLY WAIT AND BELIEVE IN HER.
.....
PER-HAPS.

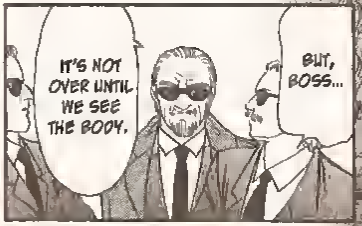

CHUNK CHUNK CHUNK CHUNK
WHAT IS IT?
SMOKE?
NO.
NO WAY.
GASP
ERIC! LOOK!

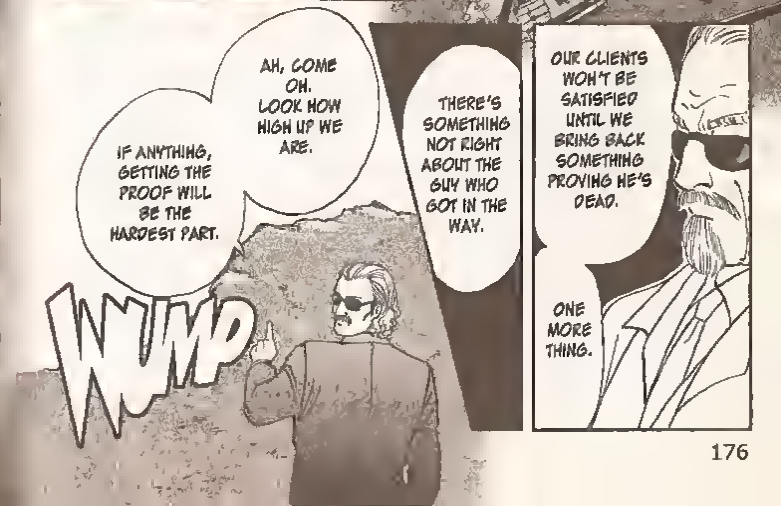

RUSTLE
AAAAAARGH!
ERIC?
FORGET IT! LET GO OF ME!
YOU HAVE TO STAY HIDDEN!
MY BUDDIES WILL ROAST ME ALIVE IF THEY FIND OUT SOME GIRL SAVED MY BEHIND.
BUT, THIS AIN'T ME!
I DUNNO WHO YOU ARE. I DUNNO WHO SHE IS.
ERIC!


WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP
BELOW THE CLIFF.
WHERE'S IT COMING FROM?
WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP
WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP

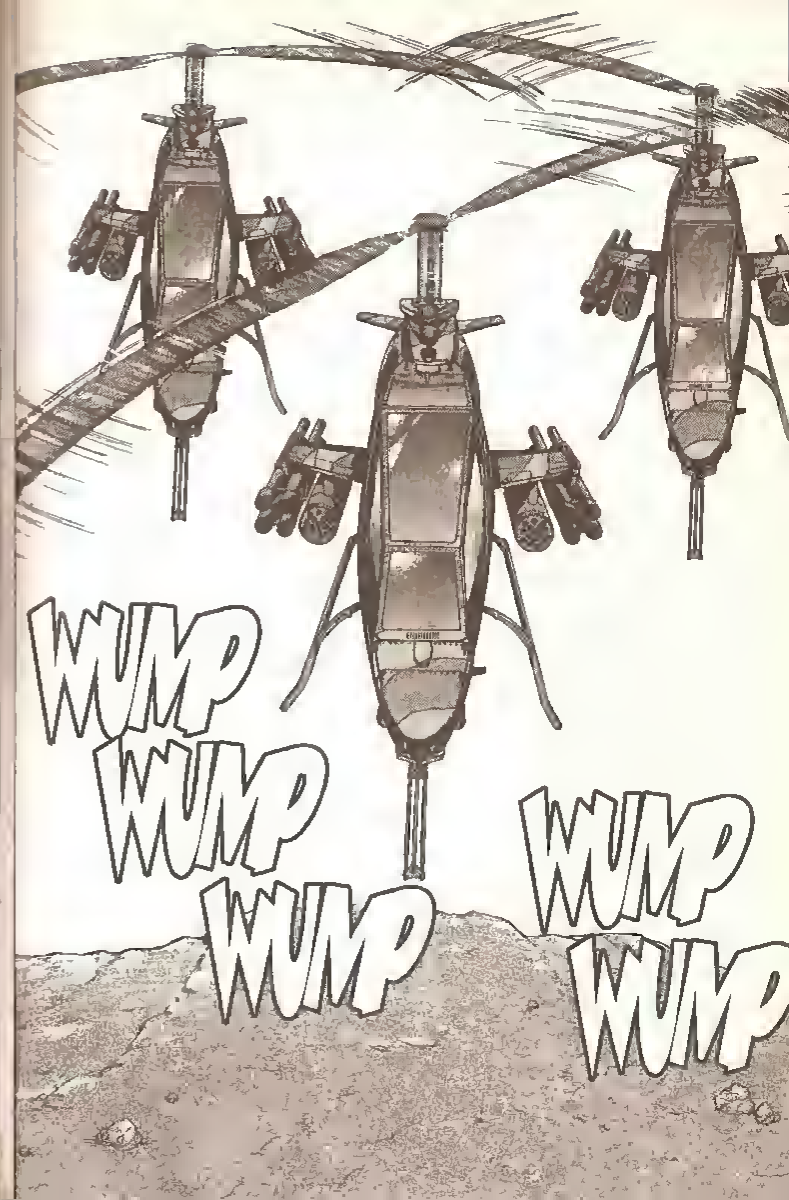

NO ONE COULD'VE SURVIVED THAT.
LIKE THELMA AND LOUISE.

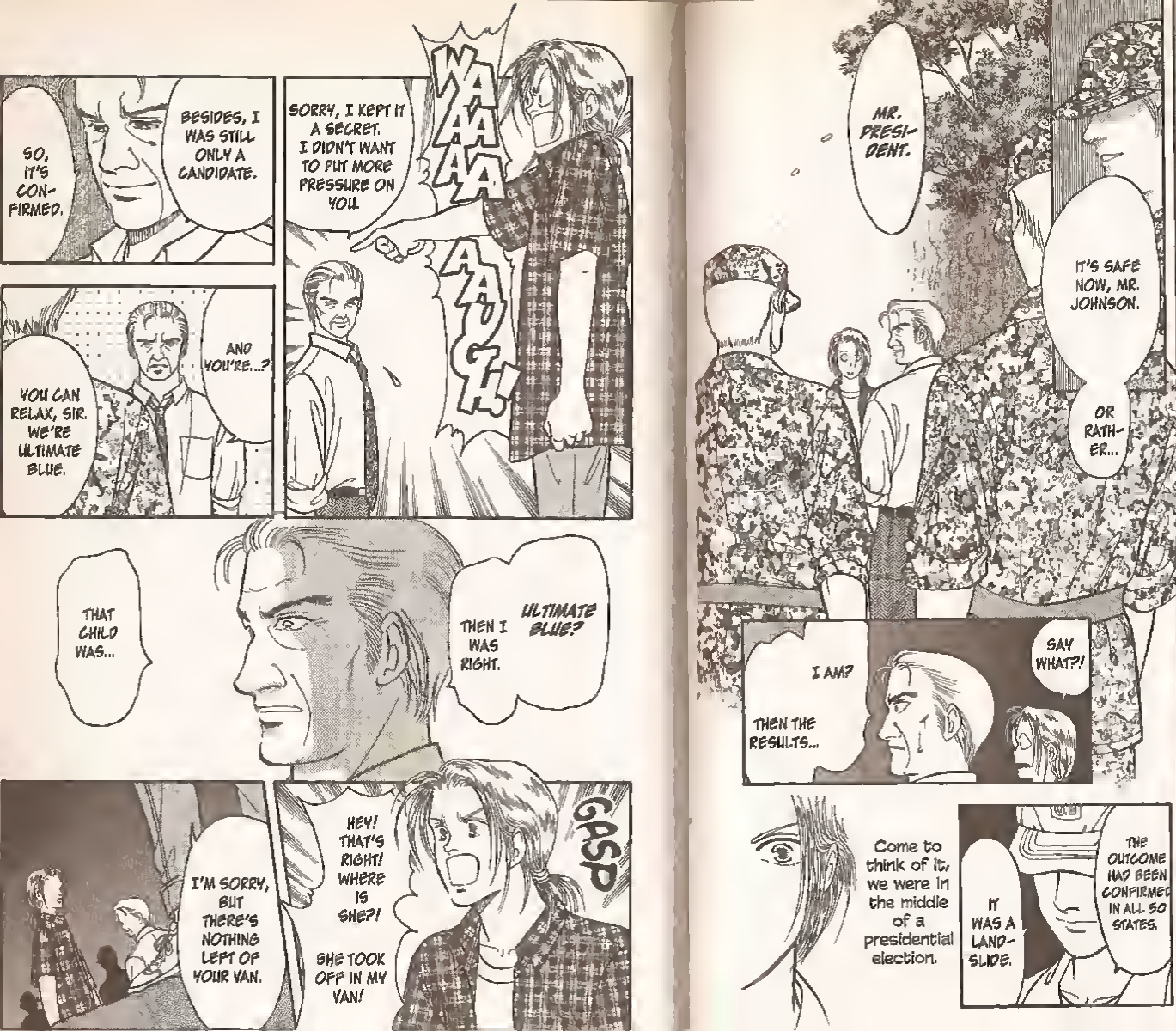

DON'T TAKE ANYTHING FOR GRANTED.


IT'S NOT OVER UNTIL WE SEE THE BODY.
BUT, BOSS...

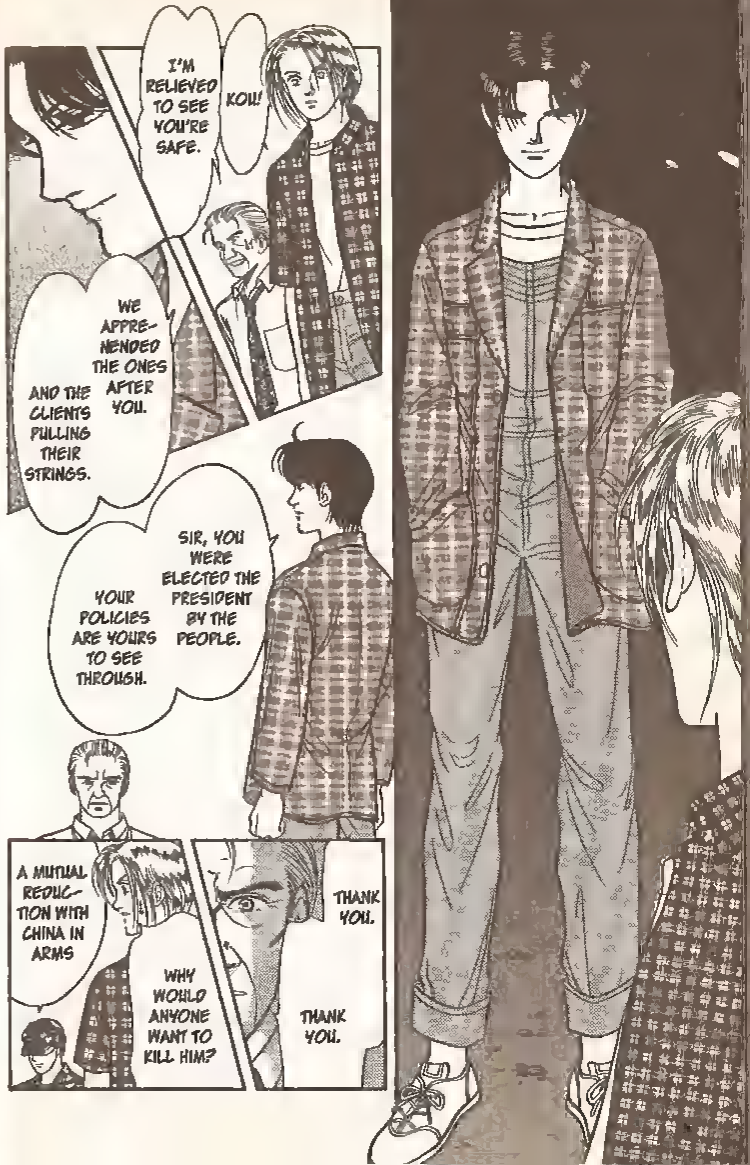

AH, COME OH. LOOK HOW HIGH UP WE ARE.
IF ANYTHING, GETTING THE PROOF WILL BE THE HARDEST PART.
WUMP
THERE'S SOMETHING NOT RIGHT ABOUT THE GUY WHO GOT IN THE WAY.
OUR CLIENTS WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL WE BRING BACK SOMETHING PROVING HE'S DEAD.
ONE MORE THING.

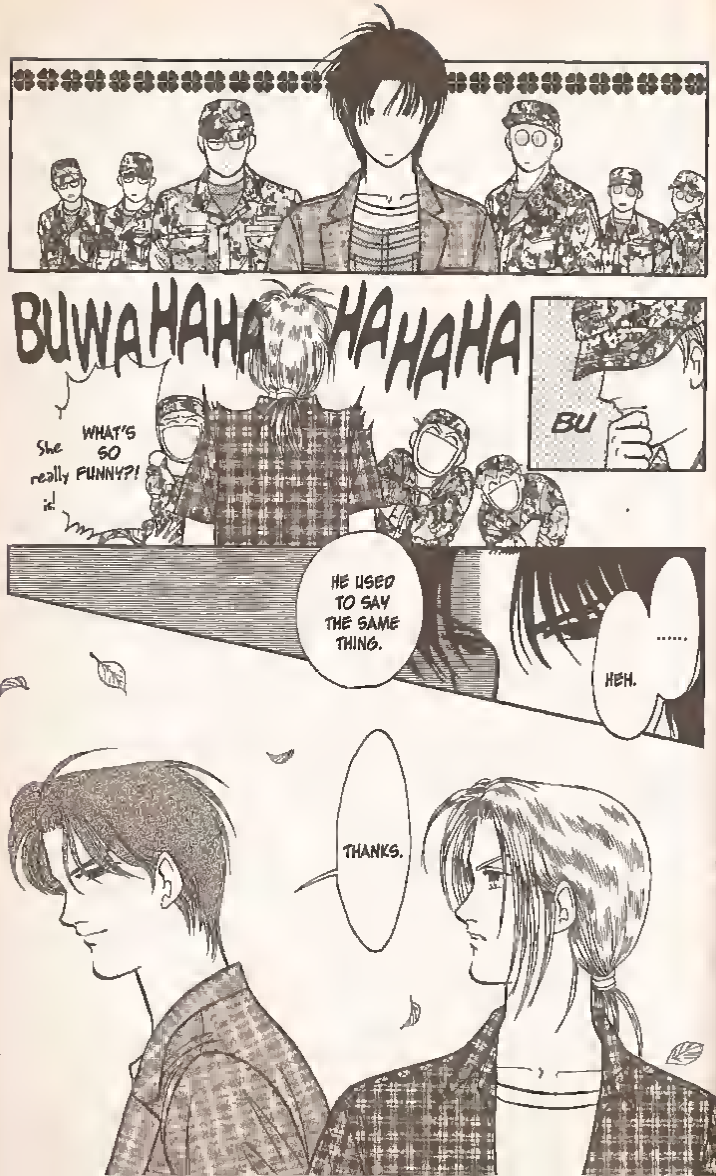

HANDS UP.

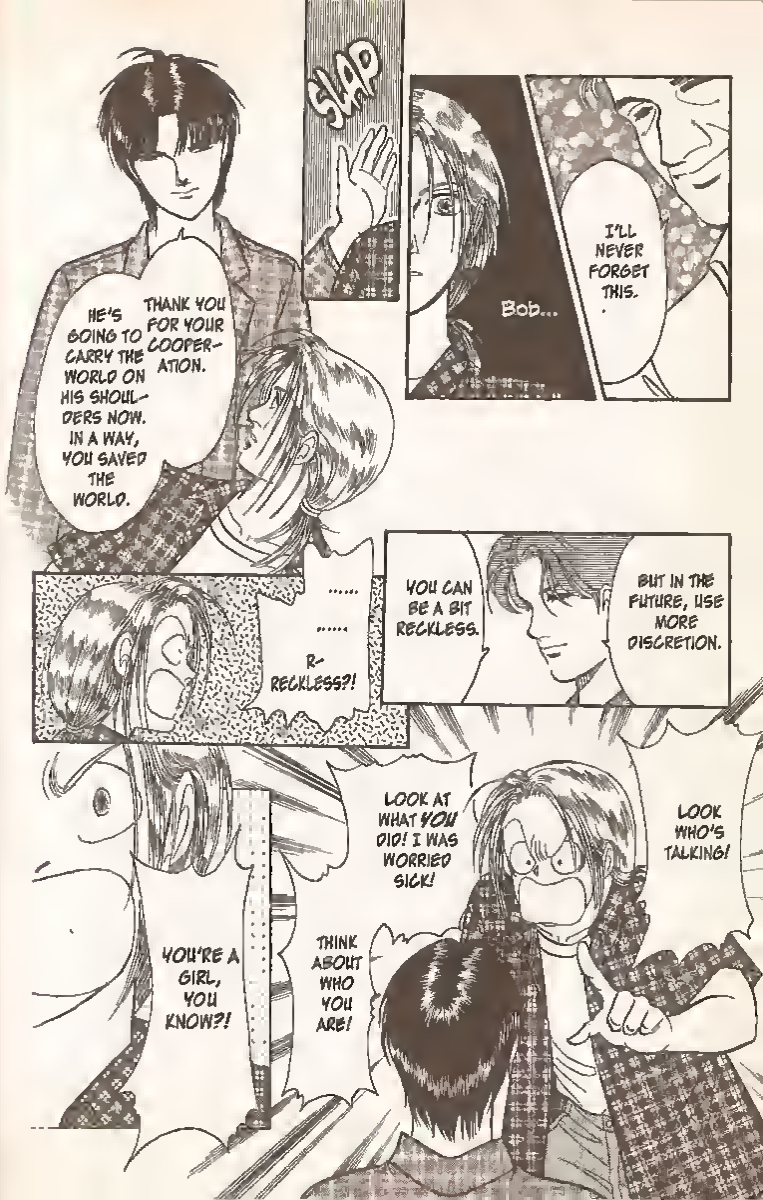

WUMP
WUMP
WUMP
WUMP
WUMP

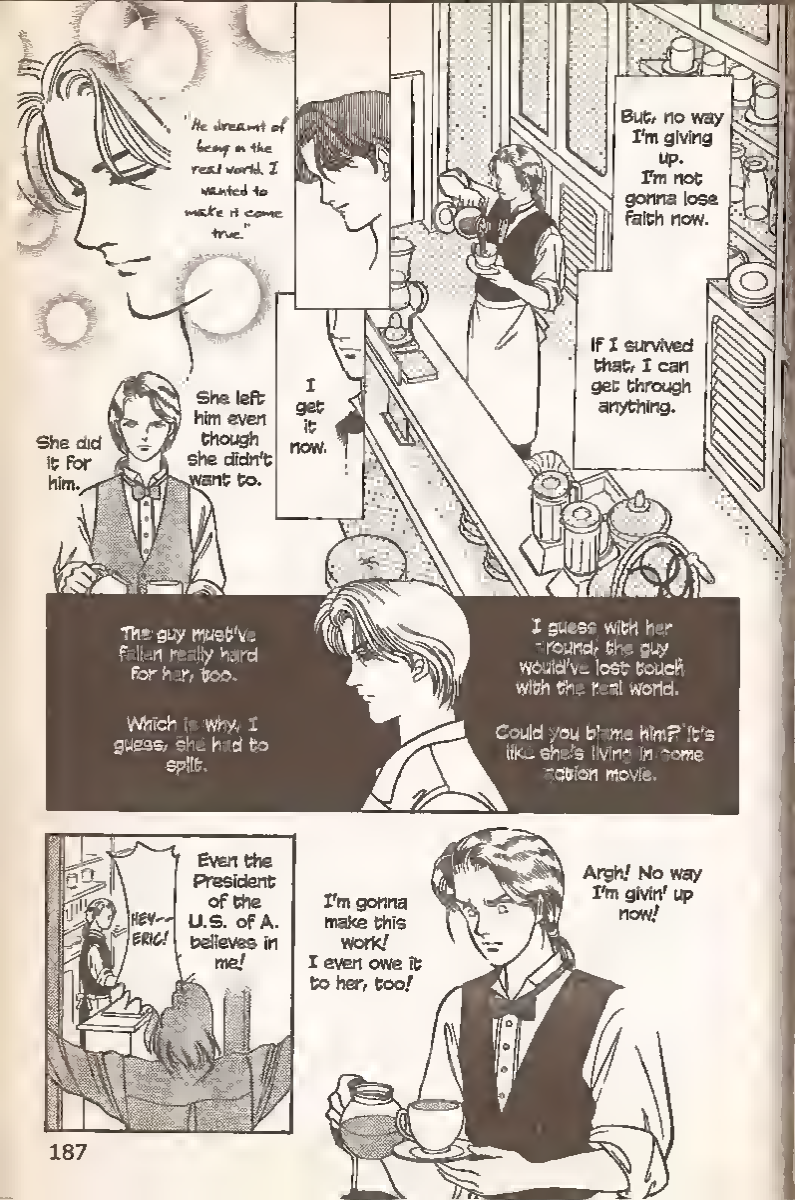

SO, IT'S CONFIRMED.
BESIDES, I WAS STILL ONLY A CANDIDATE.
SORRY, I KEPT IT A SECRET. I DIDN'T WANT TO PUT MORE PRESSURE ON YOU.
WAAAAA
AAUGH
YOU CAN RELAX, SIR. WE'RE ULTIMATE BLUE.
AND YOU'RE...?
THAT CHILD WAS...
THEN I WAS RIGHT.
ULTIMATE BLUE?
I'M SORRY, BUT THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF YOUR VAN.
HEY! THAT'S RIGHT! WHERE IS SHE?!
SHE TOOK OFF IN MY VAN!
GASP
MR. PRESIDENT.
IT'S SAFE NOW, MR. JOHNSON.
OR RATHER...
THEN THE RESULTS...
I AM?
SAY WHAT?!
Come to think of it, we were in the middle of a presidential election.
IT WAS A LANDSLIDE.
THE OUTCOME HAD BEEN CONFIRMED IN ALL 50 STATES.

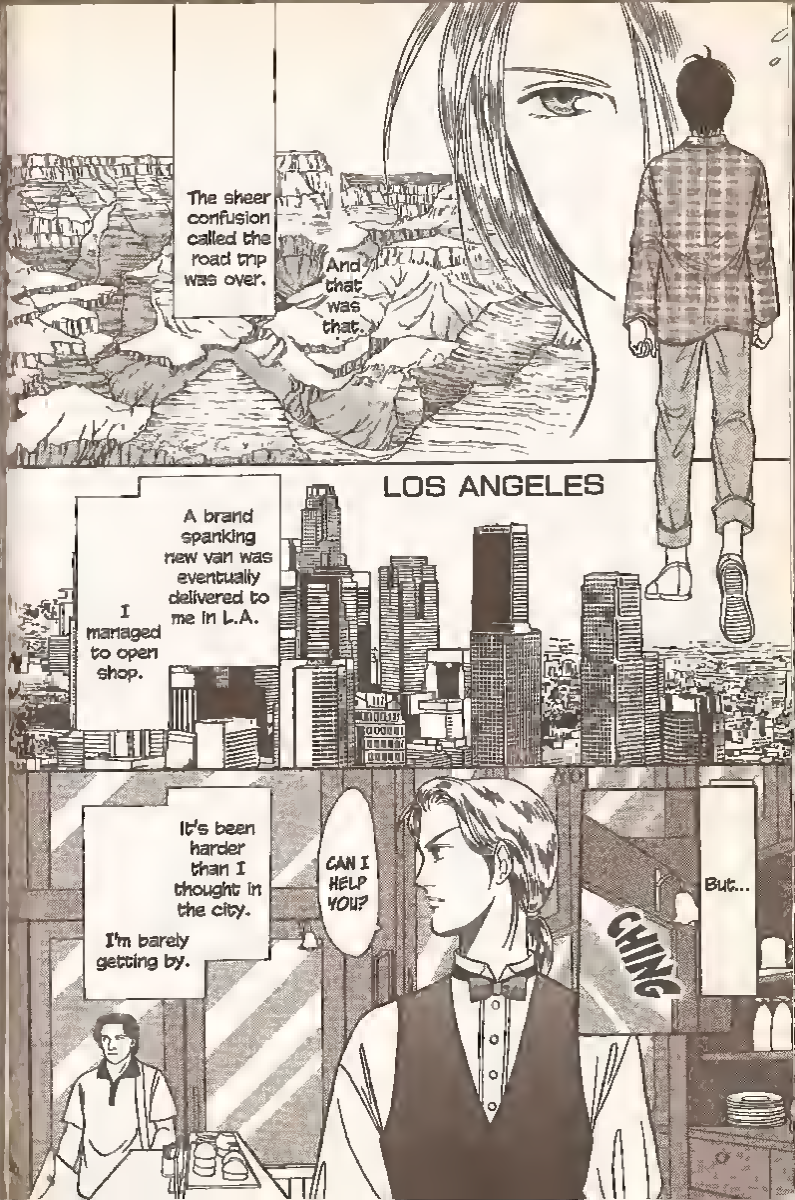

BUT, CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE ARMS INDUSTRY WERE LESS THAN PLEASED AND WENT AS FAR AS KIDNAPPING TO STOP HIM.
THE PRESIDENT'S A MAN OF ACTION. HE'D ALREADY MANAGED ASSURANCES FROM CHINA.
ONE OF HIS CAMPAIGN PROMISES WAS A REDUCTION IN ARMS.
WE GOT THEM FOR NOW.
I didn't know that. I never watch the news.
HIS POPULARITY RANKED UP THERE WITH KENNEDY'S.
IT WAS PRETTY MUCH GUARANTEED HE WOULD WIN.
I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE UP, THOUGH.
BUT, OTHERS WILL TAKE THEIR PLACE. IT'S A DEEP-ROOTED PROBLEM.
YOU MADE ME REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF DREAMS JUST WHEN I'D LOST FAITH.
THANKS, ERIC.
YOU DID MORE THAN SAVE MY LIFE.

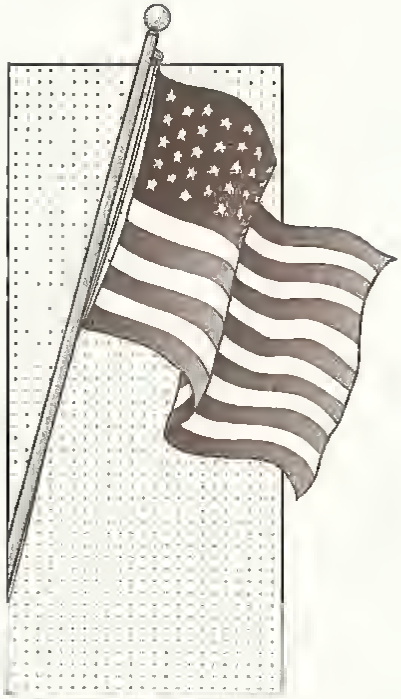

I'M RELIEVED TO SEE YOU'RE SAFE.
KOU!
WE APPREHENDED THE ONES AFTER YOU.
AND THE CLIENTS PULLING THEIR STRINGS.
SIR, YOU WERE ELECTED THE PRESIDENT BY THE PEOPLE.
YOUR POLICIES ARE YOURS TO SEE THROUGH.
A MUTUAL REDUCTION WITH CHINA IN ARMS
WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO KILL HIM?
THANK YOU.
THANK YOU.


BUWAHAHAHAHAHAHA
BU
She is really WHAT'S SO FUNNY?!
HE USED TO SAY THE SAME THING.
.....
HEH.
THANKS.

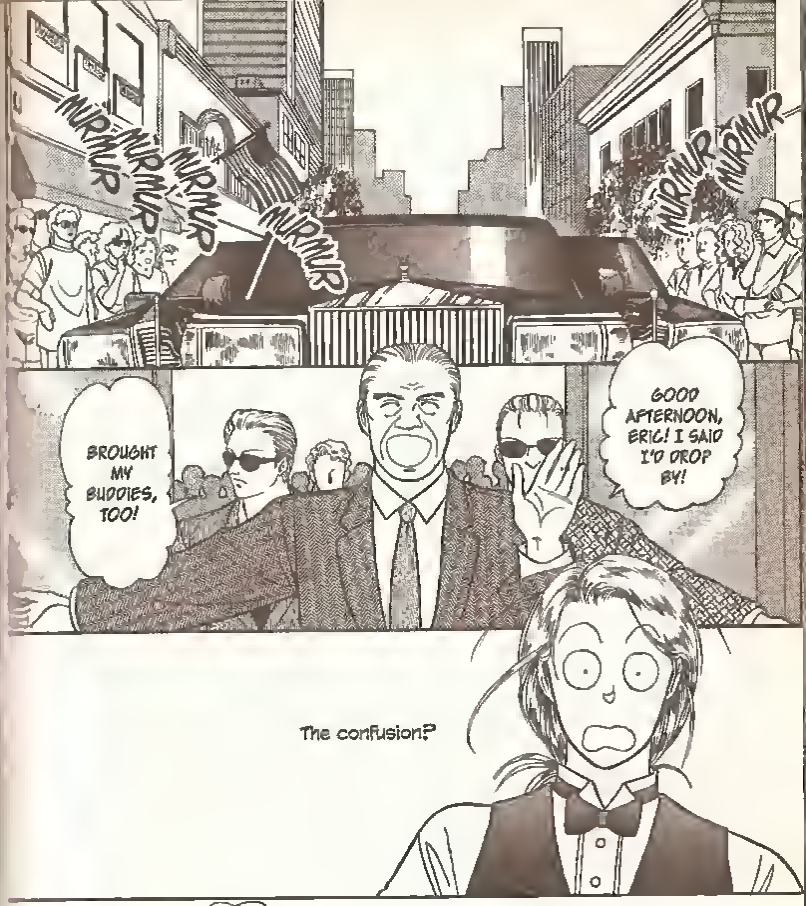

SMAP
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.
HE'S GOING TO CARRY THE WORLD ON HIS SHOULDERS NOW. IN A WAY, YOU SAVED THE WORLD.
Bob...
I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS.
.....
.....
R-RECKLESS?!
YOU CAN BE A BIT RECKLESS.
BUT IN THE FUTURE, USE MORE DISCRETION.
YOU'RE A GIRL, YOU KNOW?!
THINK ABOUT WHO YOU ARE!
LOOK AT WHAT YOU DID! I WAS WORRIED SICK!
LOOK WHO'S TALKING!


"He dreamt of being in the real world. I wanted to make it come true."
But, no way I'm giving up. I'm not gonna lose faith now.
If I survived that, I can get through anything.
I get it now.
She left him even though she didn't want to.
She did it for him.
The guy must've fallen really hard for her, too.
Which is why, I guess, she had to split.
I guess with her around, the guy would've lost touch with the real world.
Could you blame him? It's like she's living in some action movie.
Even the President of the U.S. of A. believes in me!
HEY--ERIC!
I'm gonna make this work! I even owe it to her, too!
Argh! No way I'm givin' up now!


The sheer confusion called the road trip was over.
And that was that.
LOS ANGELES
A brand spanking new van was eventually delivered to me in L.A.
I managed to open shop.
It's been harder than I thought in the city.
I'm barely getting by.
CAN I HELP YOU?
CHING
But...



End of Musashi Number Nine 6





End of Mission 13, Under the Star Spangled Banner

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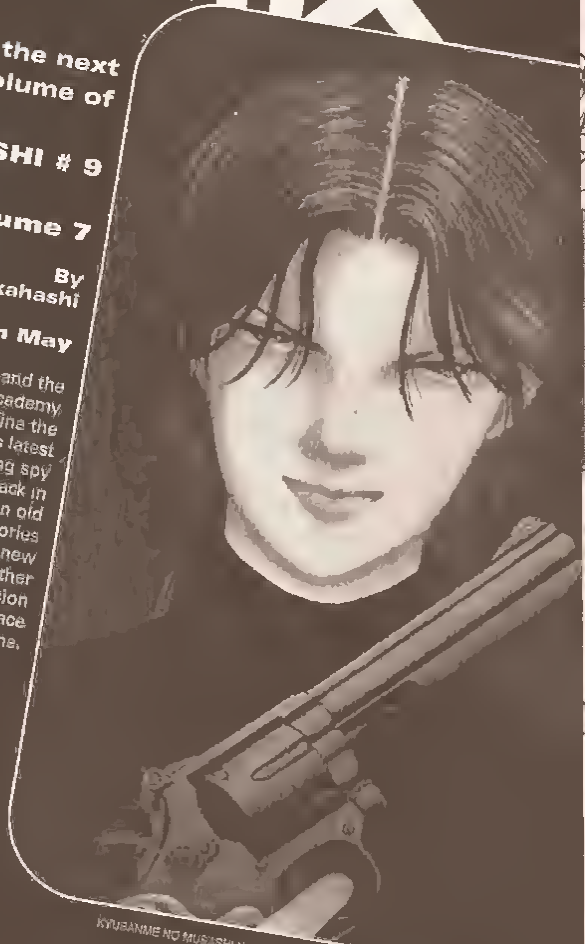
MUSASHI # 9

Volume 7

By
Miyuki Takahashi

Available in May

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